

CT 105 .H54 1922
Hillis, Newell Dwight, 1858-
1929.
Great men as prophets of a



Great Men as Prophets
of a New Era

By
NEWELL DWIGHT HILLIS

A Man's Value to Society

Studies in Self-Culture and Character.

The Investment of Influence

Studies in Social Sympathy and Service.

Great Books as Life-Teachers

Studies of Character, Real and Ideal

The Contagion of Character

Studies in Culture and Success.

Great Men as Prophets of a New Era

Studies in Personality and Power.

The Battle of Principle

Heroism and Eloquence of Anti-Slavery
Conflict.

German Atrocities

The Blot on the Kaiser's 'Scutcheon

*Rebuilding Europe in the Face of World-Wide
Bolshevism*

All the Year Round

Sermons for Church and Civic Celebrations.

BOOKLETS

Foretokens of Immortality

How the Inner Light Failed

Right Living as a Fine Art

The Master of the Science of Right Living

The School in the Home

EDITED BY DOCTOR HILLIS

Lectures and Orations by Henry Ward Beecher

Great Men as Prophets of a New Era

By

NEWELL DWIGHT HILLIS

*Author of "The Investment of Influence,"
"A Man's Value to Society," "Great
Books as Life Teachers"*



NEW YORK

CHICAGO

Fleming H. Revell Company

LONDON

AND

EDINBURGH

Copyright, 1922, by
FLEMING H. REVELL COMPANY

New York: 158 Fifth Avenue
Chicago: 17 North Wabash Ave.
London: 21 Paternoster Square
Edinburgh: 75 Princes Street

Foreword

GREAT institutions are the shadows that great men cast across the centuries. A great law, a great liberty, a great art or tool or reform represents a great soul, organized, and made unconsciously immortal for all time. Explorers trace the Nile or Amazon back to the lake in which the river takes its rise. Historians trace institutions back to some hero from whose mind and heart the life-giving movement pours forth. When the scholar travels back to the far-off beginnings of jurisprudence, he comes to some Moses, toiling in Thebes, to some Solon in Athens, to some Justinian in Rome. Not otherwise the renaissance of painting, sculpture, and architecture begins with some Giotto, some Michael Angelo, some Christopher Wren. Scholars often speak of history as narratory or philosophical, but in the last analysis, history is biographical. These studies were prepared for the students of Plymouth Institute in the belief that biography is life's wisest teacher, and that the lives of great men are the most inspiring books to be found in our libraries.

N. D. H.

*Plymouth Institute,
Brooklyn, N. Y.*

Contents

I.	Dante, and the Dawn After the Dark Ages	9
	(1265-1321)	
II.	Savonarola, and the Renaissance of Con- science	34
	(1452-1498)	
III.	William the Silent, and Brave Little Holland	55
	(1533-1584)	
IV.	Oliver Cromwell, and the Rise of De- mocracy in England	84
	(1599-1658)	
V.	John Milton, the Scholar in Politics	115
	(1608-1674)	
VI.	John Wesley, and the Moral Awaken- ing of the Common People	143
	(1703-1791)	
VII.	Garibaldi, the Idol of the New Italy	166
	(1807-1882)	
VIII.	John Ruskin, and the Diffusion of the Beautiful	190
	(1819-1900)	
	Index	217

I

DANTE (1265-1321)

And the Dawn After the Dark Ages

ALL scholars are agreed as to the classes of men who build the State. There are the soldiers who keep the State in liberty, the physicians who keep the State in health, the teachers who sow the land with wisdom and knowledge, the farmers and merchants who feed and clothe the people, the prophets who keep the visions burning, and the poets who inspire and fertilize the soul of the race. But in every age and clime, the poet has been the real builder of his city and country. The only kind of work that lives forever is the work of the poet. Parthenons and cathedrals crumble, tools rust, bridges decay, bronzes melt, but the truth, put in artistic work, survives war, flood, fire, and the tooth of time itself. "The poet's power," said George William Curtis, "is not dramatic, obvious, imposing, immediate, like that of the statesman, the warrior and the inventor. But it is as deep and as strong and abiding. The soldier fights for his native land, but the poet

Dante

makes it worth fighting for. The statesman enlarges liberty, but the poet fosters that love in the heart of the citizen. The inventor multiplies the conveniences of life, but the poet makes the life itself worth living. We cannot find out the secret of his power. Until we know why the rose is sweet, or the dew-drop pure, or the rainbow beautiful, we cannot know why the poet is the best benefactor of humanity. But we know that the poet is the harmonizer, strengthener and consoler, and that the inexpressible mystery of Divine Love and purpose has been best breathed in parable and poem.”

By common consent the three great poets of the world are Homer, Dante and Shakespeare; and of the three, the two supreme names are Dante and Shakespeare. After six centuries, what Hallam said nearly a hundred years ago still holds true: “Dante’s orbit is his own, and the track of his wheels can never be confounded with that of any rival.” Dante was the greatest man of his country, he wrote the greatest book of his era, he started the greatest intellectual movement of any age or time. The influence of his thinking upon the people of Italy, the Italy of his own day and of succeeding generations, is one of the marvels of history. He was the interpreter

Dawn After the Dark Ages

of his age to itself; but he was also the interpreter of man to all ages. Some names there are whose light shines brightly for a brief time, after the fashion of the falling stars, but Dante's emblem is the sun, whose going forth is unto the ends of the earth, and whose shining brings universal summer.

Dante has been well-called the "Morning Star of the Renaissance." He was born at the end of, perhaps, the darkest period in history,—the five black centuries succeeding the fall of Rome; he lived to see the first fruits of his own sowing—that wonderful rebirth of art and culture which was to culminate, two hundred years later, in the canvases of Raphael and the sculptures of Michael Angelo. It has been beautifully said that before singing his song Dante had to invent his harp. No graceful phrase ever had a sounder kernel of truth. Great poets are more than great artists in language; they create languages, and Dante, like his two great compeers, Homer and Shakespeare, moulded and shaped the tongue for future generations. He began his career at a moment when the Latin tongue was dying and the Italian language was still waiting to be born. He took the vulgar speech of his own day and gave it colour and richness, form and substance, eternal dignity and beauty.

Dante

What Homer did for the Greek language, what King Alfred's Bible did for English literature, that, and more, did Dante for the Italian tongue. The influence of his thinking upon the people of Italy is indicated by the fact that *The Divine Comedy* was printed three times in the one year of 1472, nine times before the fifteenth century ended, and, to-day, there are literally thousands of volumes in the libraries of the world upon Dante and his poems. With loving extravagance d'Annunzio said at the great celebration held last year in Italy: "Single-handed Dante created Italy, as Michael Angelo by sheer force of genius created his *Moses*, and made it the supreme marble in history."

No one has ever been able to define genius, though many scholars have told us what genius is not. Many men in the English lecture halls and universities had talent, but that stablekeeper's son, John Keats, had genius. More than one of the four hundred members of the House of Lords during Charles the Second's reign had talent, but a poor tinker, John Bunyan, had genius, that blazed like the sun. There were multitudes of men living in the Thirteen Colonies, and many of them rich, but that poor boy flying a kite, Benjamin Franklin, had the divine gift. Not otherwise,

Dawn After the Dark Ages

many men living in Florence at the end of the thirteenth century had talent, but Dante Alighieri had the gift, and he towered above his fellows as Monte Rosa towers above the burning plains of Italy. Strictly speaking, Dante's gift was not that of the poet alone. He was a moralist as well as a poet—above all others, the singer of man's soul. He believed himself to be ordained of God to explain the moral order of the universe, man's share in that order, his duty and his destiny. Blind Homer gave us the immortal *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, but Homer was a poet, not a teacher, and if there are lessons in the story of Achilles and Ulysses we have to learn those lessons for ourselves. Shakespeare, the organ-voice of England, gave us *Lear* and *Hamlet*, *Othello* and *Macbeth*, but Shakespeare was a poet, not a teacher, and Macbeth's sin, written though it is in letters of fire, is nevertheless accompanied by no comments of the author. Not so with the immortal *Comedy* of Dante. For Dante was a teacher first, and a poet afterward. Without the brilliancy of intellect or the compass of achievements that were Shakespeare's, without the directness or the simplicity of Homer, he was more serious than either. He had the passion of a reformer, the fiery courage of a prophet. He poured his

Dante

very heart's blood into his pages. Hating oppression, he was like one specially raised up to point the path to peace, and to vindicate the ways of God to man.

The great thinker was born in Florence in the year 1265. His era was the era of the Dark Ages; his century one of the submerged centuries. For five hundred years black darkness had lain upon the world. It was an era of war, when barons were constantly at strife. Feudalism was entrenched behind stone walls, the landowners were masters, and the serfs were slaves. Every road was infested with bandits. There was no shipping upon the Mediterranean. The mariner's compass had not yet been invented. Commerce was scant and factories almost unknown. Men lived, for the most part, on coarse bread and vegetables, without luxuries, and without what we call the simplest necessities. The common people were huddled in miserable villages, behind stone walls, with unpaved streets and windowless houses, in which ignorance, filth, squalor, and bestiality prevailed. Peasants wore the same leather garments for a lifetime. The dead were buried under the churches. Prisoners rotted in dungeons under the banquetting hall of the castle. Two hundred years were to pass before Columbus set foot

Dawn After the Dark Ages

upon the deck of the *Santa Maria*. Two hundred and fifty years were to pass before Michael Angelo could lift the dome above St. Peter's. But if the peasant was ignorant, and the poor man wretched, the nobleman and courtier was the child of luxury and gilded vice. It was an age of contrasts so violent as to be all but incredible to the modern reader. There were no books, for the art of printing was still to be invented, yet in an age of parchment manuscripts young noblemen were taught to speak in verse and to write in rhymed pentameters. There was no science of geography and the world was believed to be a flat board with a fence around it. Yet in this era, when few men could spell and fewer read, the very monks in the monasteries were writing theses on problems so abstract as to weary the modern scholar. For five hundred years the world had looked to the Church, but the Church had descended to the perpetration of crimes so terrible, that their mere chronicle sickens the heart and chills the blood.

Into this world of paradox and contradiction—a world of gloom, shot through with fitful gleams of superstition—was born Dante, the poet of love and hope and divine regeneration. We know little of Dante's parentage, as we know all too little of his life, but this much

Dante

we do know—the family was the noble family of the Alighieri, followers and supporters of the party then in power in Florence. Dante was educated by his mother, and by his mother's relative, the scholar-poet Brunetto Latini. Like John Stuart Mill he was a mental prodigy from infancy. Like Milton he was trained in the strictest academical education which the age afforded. Like Bacon he was a universal scholar before he passed out of his teens. Like Pope he thought and wrote in verse before he could write in prose. Among his friends and intimates were the poets Guido Cavalcanti and Cino da Pistoria, Dino Frescobaldi and Lapo Guianni, the musician Casella and the artist Giotto. With such companions and under such guidance, Dante mastered all the sciences of the day at a time when it was not impossible to know all that could be known.

But dreamer and student though he was, he early insisted upon sharing the burdens of the State. On two occasions he bore arms for his country. While still in his twenties he was offered the post of ambassador to Rome; before he was thirty he had represented his native city at foreign courts, and from his thirtieth to his thirty-fifth year his voice was heard with growing frequency in municipal

Dawn After the Dark Ages

affairs. In the summer of the year 1300, when he was thirty-five years of age, he was chosen as one of the Priors, or magistrates, of Florence.

The opening year of the new century—the year in which Giotto was meditating his immortal *Duomo*, with its famous tower—was ushered in by a civic revolution in Florence. Dante, with other innocent citizens, was banished and condemned to death by burning. A statesman, he saw his party defeated and driven from the land; a man of property, he lost his whole fortune; one of the proudest of men, he was forced to humble himself and live on foreign alms. Inspired by the noblest intentions, the world gave him no thanks, but drove him forth like a wild beast, branded his name with foul crimes and condemned him to wander over the hills of Italy till death at last gave him release. He never saw Florence again. For years he knew poverty, neglect and hatred. Sick with the noise of political dissension, he strained his eyes toward the hills for the appearance of a universal monarch; but the vision was never realized. We know but little of his wanderings. Many cities and castles have claimed the honour of giving him shelter; we know only that in old age he was compelled to “climb the stranger’s

Dante

toilsome stairs, and eat the bitter bread of others.”

Such, briefly sketched, is the life-history of this man who has been called “the voice of ten silent centuries.” In an era of luxury he had lived simply and frugally; in an era of debate and publicity, he had preferred seclusion; drawn at last into public life by his own sense of duty, he had been driven forth into exile, to die alone in a foreign city. It is the greatness of Dante that, in spite of defeat and disappointment, in spite of every form of hardship, in the face of every conceivable form of adversity, he went on with his work and completed his masterpiece, the greatest achievement in the whole history of Italian literature. Out of his own heart-break he distilled hope and encouragement for others and from the broken harmonies of his own life he created a world-symphony.

The best-loved books in our libraries are books of heroism, books of eloquence, books of success, and books of love. It is a matter of misfortune that no history of human love has ever been written. Scholars have set forth the history of wars, the history of engines and ships, the history of laws and reforms, but no library holds a history of the greatest gift of man, the gift of love. That is the one creative

Dawn After the Dark Ages

gift that belongs to his soul. Beyond all other writers, the author of the *Divine Comedy* is the poet of love. Love was the inspiration of his youth, the beacon of his middle life and the transfiguring glory of his old age. All his poems are monuments to the abiding and ennobling power of a pure passion. His love for Beatrice has fascinated the generations, and remains to-day one of the few immortal love stories of the world, as moving as the romance of Abelard and Héloïse, and infinitely more exalting. No understanding of his poems is possible without a knowledge of that love and its tremendous influence upon his life and work.

Beatrice Portinari, the object of Dante's devotion, was the daughter of a merchant, living in a street not far from his father's house. Dante saw her but a few times, and she died when he was twenty-seven, but from the moment when, on that bright spring morning, he first viewed her lovely face, his whole heart and mind were kindled. "She appeared to me," he writes, "at a festival, dressed in that most noble and honourable colour, scarlet—girden and ornamented in a manner suitable to her age, and from that moment love ruled my soul. After many days had passed, it happened that passing through the streets,

Dante

she turned her eyes to the spot where I stood, and with ineffable courtesy, she greeted me, and this had such an effect on me that it seemed I had reached the furthest limit of blessedness." He describes but three other meetings. While he was absent from the city—probably during one of the two campaigns in which he fought—her father gave her in marriage to another man. She was only twenty-four when she died.

No one will ever know whether Beatrice was indeed the loveliest girl in Italy; whether she really was the daughter of intellect, or whether the greatness was in Dante, who projected the image of beauty, created by his imagination and superimposed upon Beatrice. We all know that it is within the power of the sun in the late afternoon to cast the brilliant hues of gold and purple upon the vine and transform slender tendrils into purest gold. Dante had a powerful intellect, the finest imagination of any known artist, vast moral endowments—gifts, however, that in themselves are impotent. The sailing vessel, no matter how large the sails, is helpless until the winds fill the canvas, and hurl the cargo toward some far-off port. Just as Abelard waited for the coming of Héloïse; just as Robert Browning's soul was never properly

Dawn After the Dark Ages

enkindled before the coming of Elizabeth Barrett, so the intellect of Dante waited for Beatrice. The quality and quantity of flame in the fireplace is not determined by the size of the match that kindles the fire, but by the quality of fuel that waits for the spark. The strength and power of Dante's attachment was in the vast endowments of his soul, and not in Beatrice. It may well be that thirty years later, Dante, who realized that he was the strongest man then living in the world and who was at once a scholar, a statesman and a soldier, during the solitude of his exile in a distant city turned his mind backward and broke the alabaster box of genius upon the head of a commonplace girl, just as Raphael lent the beauty of St. Cecilia to the face and figure of a flower-woman, a girl whose face and figure furnished the outlines for his drawing, but held no part of the divine, ineffable and dazzling loveliness of an angel.

Whatever the truth—and there is little chance that we shall ever know the truth—this much is certain: Dante's earliest long poem, the famous "*Vita Nuova*" (New Life) celebrates his love for Beatrice, and is nothing more than a journal of the heart, a secret diary of his emotions. The *Vita Nuova* is as far removed from the modern sentimental love

Dante

tale as June is removed from some almanac prepared a year in advance of the weather changes predicted. It records Dante's first glimpse of Beatrice, the adoration she awakened in him, and the fervour of devotion to which she lifted him; it describes his premonition of her death, and it ends with his resolve to devote his remaining years to her memory. The last chapter of the book looks forward to the *Divine Comedy*. About a year after Beatrice's death, he writes: "It was given me to behold a wonderful vision, wherein I saw things which determined me to say nothing further of this blessed one unto such time as I could discourse more worthily concerning her. And to this end I labour all I can, as she in truth knoweth. Therefore if it be His pleasure through whom is the life of all things that my life continue with me a few years, it is my hope that I shall yet write concerning her what hath not before been written of any woman." Completed years later, the immortal *Comedy* exists to-day as the most wonderful tribute to a woman ever penned by any poet.

In a mood of lofty pride, Dante placed himself among the six great poets of all time. To-day, all scholars applaud the accuracy and humility of his judgment. Every strong man

Dawn After the Dark Ages

knows what he can do. He is conscious of his own vast reserves. So often has he measured himself with his fellow-men that he realizes the number, the magnitude and relative strength of his divine endowments. All men of the first order of genius have realized the endowment they have received from God and their fathers. And the *Divine Comedy* justifies Dante's pride in his own powers. It cannot be classified with a phrase nor dismissed with a label. It is not a poem, like one of Tennyson's *Idylls of the King*; it is rather an encyclopedia upon Italy. It is at one and the same moment an autobiography, a series of personal reminiscences, a philosophy, an oration and the spiritual pilgrimage of a thirteenth century *Childe Harold*, with here and there a lyric poem. The motive which inspired Dante was his sense of the wretchedness of man in this mortal life. The only means of rescue from this wretchedness he conceived to be the exercise of reason, enlightened by God. To convince man of this truth, to bring home to him the conviction of the eternal consequences of his conduct in this world, to show him the path of salvation, was Dante's aim. To lend force and beauty to such a design he conceived the poem as an allegory, and made himself to be its protagonist. He depicts a vision, in

Dante

which the poet is conducted first by Virgil, as the representative of human reason, through Hell and Purgatory, and then by Beatrice, as the representative of divine revelation, through Paradise to the Heaven, where at last he beholds the triune God.

The action of the *Divine Comedy* opens in the early morning of the Thursday before Easter in the year 1300. Dante dreams that he had "reached the half-way point in his path of life, at the entrance of an obscure forest." He would advance, but three horrible beasts bar the way, a wolf, a lion and a leopard, symbolical of the temptations of the world—cupidity, the pride of life and the lusts of the flesh. Then the shade of Virgil appears, representing the intellect and conscience, glorified—to serve as his guide in the long wanderings through the Inferno. Virgil tells him he can accompany him only through Hell and Purgatory, but that Beatrice shall conduct him through those happy spheres, the portals of which a pagan may not enter. So begins that wondrous journey through the regions of the damned, over the entrance of which is written the awful words: "All hope abandon ye who enter here." The world through which the two poets journey is peopled, not with characters of heroic story, but with men

Dawn After the Dark Ages

and women known personally or by repute to Dante. Popes, kings, emperors, poets and warriors, Florentine citizens of all degrees are there, "some doomed to hopeless punishment, others expiating their offenses in milder torments and looking forward to deliverance in due time." Hell is conceived as a vast conical hollow, reaching to the center of the earth. It has three great divisions, corresponding to Aristotle's three classes of vice, incontinence, brutishness and malice. The sinners, by malice, are divided from the last by a yet more formidable barrier. They lie at the bottom of a pit, with vertical sides, and accessible only by supernatural means; a monster named Geryon bears the poets down on his back. At the very bottom of the pit is Lucifer, immovably fixed in ice. And climbing down his limbs, the travellers reach the center of the earth, whence a cranny conducts them back to the surface, which they reach as Easter Day is dawning.

Purgatory is conceived as a mountain, rising solitary from the ocean on that side of the earth that is opposite to ours. It is divided into terraces and its top is the terrestrial Paradise, the first abode of man. The seven terraces correspond to the seven deadly sins, which encircle the mountain and are reached

Dante

by a series of steep climbs, compared by Dante to the path from Florence to Samminiato. The penalties are not degrading, but rather tests of patience or endurance; and in several cases Dante has to bear a share in them as he passes. At one point, the poet hesitates when he comes to a path filled with a sheet of flame; but Virgil speaks: "Between Beatrice and thee there is but that wall." Dante at once plunges into the heart of the flames. On the summit of the mountain is the Earthly Paradise, "a scene of unsurpassed magnificence," where Beatrice, representing divine knowledge, divine love and purity, is waiting to lead the wanderer through the nine spheres of the old Ptolemaic system to the very throne of God.

Such is the general scheme of the poem, in which Dante's conception of the universe is depicted in scenes of intense vividness and dramatic force. It embraces the whole field of human experience. Its aim is "not to delight, but to reprove, to rebuke, to exhort, to form men's characters" by teaching them what courses of life will meet reward, what with penalty hereafter; to "put into verse," as the poet says, "things difficult to think." The title given it is often misunderstood. The men of the Middle Ages gave the name

Dawn After the Dark Ages

“Tragedy” to every poem that ended sadly, and the name “Comedy” to every tale that ended happily. There are no traces of wit and humour in this book with its descriptions of the cleansing pains of Purgatory and the highest reaches of Paradise. Men who have little imagination seem quite unable to transport themselves back into the life and thought of the thirteenth century. Even Voltaire calls Dante a savage, and Goethe, who blundered often in his judgments of men and books, and often had to reverse himself, thought Dante’s work “dull and unreadable.” But that reader who supposes that Dante is giving a literal description of the physical torments of hell, or imagines that Michael Angelo, in his *Last Judgment*, was portraying his own literal belief, will find nothing inspiring in this wonderful book.

During the last six centuries the thinking of the world has changed. Physical pain has assumed new importance. No man living to-day has ever witnessed a brother man sentenced by a court to be burned alive, or later on, has been tried himself, and upon a false charge sentenced to death by flame. We stand aghast at Dante’s miseries and monsters, furies and gorgons, snakes and fires, lakes of pitch and pools of blood, a physical hell of utter and

Dante

unspeakable dreariness and despair. But Dante's was an era of outbreaking and almost universal physical cruelty; sinners and criminals could not be reached by argument, for they could not think; there was but one way to approach animal man, and that was from the animal side. Through fear, Dante endeavoured to scourge men back from the horrors of iniquity. He appealed to material men through the imagery of material flames, and slowly by this scourge, tried to drive them back toward obedience, sympathy and love for the poor and the weak. For their allurements also he showed them a golden city in the far-off blue, with the flowers blooming in the fields of Paradise. He used his unrivalled genius to make vice and sin revolting and infinitely repulsive, just as he tried to make truth, kindness and justice alluring.

This volume, therefore, represents "the life history of a human soul redeemed from sin and error, from lust and wrath and mammon, and restored to the right path by the reason and the grace which enable him to see things as they are." Dante's conception is that "penalty is the same thing as sin, only it is sin taken at a later period of its history and a little lower down the stream." It is in life, here and now, that men's hands are fouled

Dawn After the Dark Ages

with the pits of greed; their tongues tipped with envenomed hate; their hearts steeped in crimson ooze. It is here and now that materialists "load themselves down with sacks of yellow clay," that misers plunge into "the boiling pitch of avarice." The genius of the *Inferno* is that sins are seeds, big with the harvest of their own penalty.

Our age makes little of the *Purgatory* itself—this realm which Dante describes as the place where the human soul is cleansed and made worthy to ascend to heaven. It is described as a kind of vestibule of Paradise, where the soul fronts the results of wrongdoing, through the debt of penalty and the evil inclination of the will, and the instincts that have been perverted. The sins of which men are cleansed are the sins against love and pride, envy and anger; the sins of the body, avarice and gluttony and passion. The angels that cleanse are the angels of forgiveness and peace. On that island of cleansing Virgil and Dante land, and place their hands upon the ground and bathe in dew their tear-stained cheeks. But climbing up the steep way of penitence is like climbing up a craggy mountainside, toiling on hands and knees, with tire that almost brings despair; and yet the higher Dante climbs the easier the task. Just as in

Dante

the *Inferno*, Dante placed certain well-known figures—Judas Iscariot, who for avarice betrayed his Lord, and Alberigo who with horrible treachery murdered his own guests at a banquet, and that “youth who made the Great Refusal”; so in the *Purgatory* he shows us many men known to history who have stumbled here and there and are breast-buried in the rubbish of the world, to whom comes some angel bringing release, and whispering “Loose him, and let him go.”

When he approaches the confines of Paradise and sees from afar the glorified form of Beatrice, Dante asks that God may become to his soul like a refiner's fire and cleanse away any stain or dross of sin. Gladly he enters that healing flame, guided by a sweet voice, which sang, “Come, ye blessed of my Father;” but, says Dante, “When I was within I would have flung myself into molten glass to cool myself, so immeasurable was the burning there.” Then, broken down with utter remorse, he falls in a swoon; but he is plunged in the waters of forgetfulness and refreshed, like young plants; re-clad as if by the angel of spring, he issues from the wave, pure and true, ready to mount to the stars beyond.

Strangely enough, this book, the *Inferno*, is the most widely read. The *Purgatory* is less

Dawn After the Dark Ages

frequently opened, while men value least of all the *Paradise* of Dante. Doubtless the reason is that experience has brought familiarity with sin, so that all men understand its penalties, and at the selfsame time know something of penitence and of pardon, while the nature of that realm of perfect happiness, righteousness and peace is beyond human experience. But if any man was ever purified by suffering and earned the right to trust his visions and surrender himself to the pictures that noble imagination painted, that man was Dante. On the side of culture the measure of education of any man is his knowledge of Shakespeare. On the side of imagination and of pure and tender goodness, a man is a man just in proportion as he knows his Dante. James Russell Lowell's supreme essay was his essay on Dante, and he tells us that the great Italian "wrote with his heart's blood, like an inspired prophet of old." 'Midst all his poverty, exile and grief, he rose triumphant over sorrow and neglect. He never lost his confidence in the ultimate victory of right and truth. Hating oppression, he struggled as a prophet of liberty. Offered an invitation to return to his native city, on the condition that he would humiliate himself by confessing that he had done a wrong, he accepted an exile's

Dante

death rather than be faithless to his great convictions. Climbing the stairs of other men's houses, he salted his bread with his own tears.

An old man at fifty-six, his last days were spent in Ravenna, in the house of a noble duke, who recognized in Dante the greatest man of his time. Long afterward, Byron sought out the house where Dante died, and falling upon his knees, beat upon his breast and wept, at the recollection of the sorrows that overwhelmed the master of them all. Just as Bunyan was rewarded for the second book in English literature by twelve years in Bedford Jail, so Dante, as a reward for writing the greatest book in Italian literature, was exiled from his home and city, pursued by spies, hunted over the hills with hounds, made to conceal himself in dens and caves of the earth, and brought to an untimely death. Dying, Dante might have used the words which, later, fell from the lips of Bacon, "I leave my name and fame to foreign lands, and to my own country when long time has passed." Let us believe that after having lived for fifty-six years in at once an *Inferno* and a *Purgatory*, at last Dante, the prisoner, was redeemed out of his dungeon, the exile out of his loneliness, the fugitive out of his rags and crusts, and the cave wherein he was hiding

Dawn After the Dark Ages

from his pursuers ; that the man who for years held heart-break at bay at last was brought in out of the night, the fire-mist and the hail, into the imperial palaces of God, where one word of welcome repaid him ten thousand times for the bitter, grievous years, and where one word of love leaped forth from the ineffable light—and in a moment, his every wound was healed!

II

SAVONAROLA (1452-1498)

And the Renaissance of Conscience

WHEN the first warm days of May come to a land chilled through with the frosts of winter, all pastures and meadows, all vineyards and orchards, even the desert and the mountain rift awake to a new bloom and beauty. The revival of learning which culminated in that golden age known as the Renaissance was ushered in by the poet Dante, with his love for Beatrice and his immortal poem called the *Divine Comedy*. Dante has been likened unto that angel who descended from Heaven and, standing with one foot on the sea and one on the land, lifted the trumpet to his lips, and wakened the whole world. To Dante belongs the double glory "of immortalizing in verse the centuries behind him, while he inaugurated a new age and created a new language." But if Dante's face was turned upward and backward, his work was taken up by the great humanist, Petrarch, whose face was toward the future. Soon the whole land was awake, and while other

Renaissance of Conscience

countries were held in the grip of ice and winter, full summer burst upon Italy.

Scholars have interpreted the Renaissance from many different angles. Students of literature identify it with the discovery and reproduction of the manuscripts of the Greek and Latin authors. Artists associate it with Giotto's paintings and tower, with Michael Angelo's *Moses and Last Judgment*, and with the names of Alberti and Leonardo. Scientists point toward the discoveries of Copernicus and Columbus, just as jurists think of the rise of popular freedom and the overthrow of tyranny. Practical men associate the new era with the art of printing and the manufacture of paper and gunpowder, with the use of the compass by mariners, and the telescope by astronomers. But none of these interpretations fully suffice to explain the new era, with its new energy of the intellect and its outburst of unrivalled genius.

The mental and emotional condition of Europe at the beginning of the fifteenth century may be likened to the vague longings in the heart of that child, who, legend hath it, was carried away from his father's castle by a band of gipsies. The gipsies carried the boy to Spain, and there they taught him to ride and hunt and steal after the gipsy fashion.

Savonarola

But he had the blood of his ancestors within him, and there was something burning and throbbing within. Sometimes in his dreams he saw a beautiful face leaning over him, and heard the bosom pressure words of his mother, who could not be forgotten. Not otherwise was it with society at the beginning of the fifteenth century. For centuries the books, the arts, the tools, once so familiar to Virgil and Horace, to Mæcenæ and Cæsar Augustus had lain neglected on the shores of that Dead Sea called the Dark Ages. Vague and uneasy memories haunted Europe. Imagination increased the value of the lost treasure. Looking backward through an atmosphere roseate through fancy, Helen's face took on new loveliness. Achilles became the ideal knight, Ulysses a divine hero, and Penelope the sum of all the gifts distributed among ideal women.

But in the middle of the fifteenth century occurred the fall of Constantinople, that Saragossa sea into which had been drawn the literary treasures of the preceding centuries. Constantinople had become a treasure-house in which were assembled the manuscripts that had been carried away by the citizens of Rome fleeing from the Huns. As the centuries came and went, merchants, bankers,

Renaissance of Conscience

rich men from far-off provinces had taken their jewels, carved furniture, ivories, paintings, bronzes, marbles, rugs, silks, laces, and housed their treasure in palaces, looking out upon the Bosphorus. So that in 1452, when the advancing Saracens approached the city, the scholars and rich men of Constantinople fled to their boats, and spreading canvas sailed into the western sun. Months passed before these fugitives dropped anchor at the mouth of the Po. One morning, an old man, wrapped in a cloak stained with the salt seawater, stepped from a little boat to the wharf of Florence. Being poor and also hungry he made his way to a bread-shop. Having no money, he drew from beneath his cloak a parchment. When the bread-shop was filled with listeners he began to read the story of Helen's beauty and Achilles' courage; the story of Ulysses' wanderings and Penelope's fidelity; the tale of blind Œdipus, and of his daughter's loving care. He recited the oration of Pericles after the plague in Athens, and told the story of the wanderings of Æneas. With ever-increasing excitement the men of Florence listened. At last, waking from the spell, they lifted the stranger upon their shoulders and carried him to the palace of a merchant prince, and bade him tell the

Savonarola

story, and soon the merchant's house was crowded with young men preparing pages of vellum and sheets of leather, while writers copied the poems and the dramas of the old manuscript, and artists turned the vellum pages into illuminated missals. The spark became a flame. Learning became a glorious contagion. The fires spread from village to village, and city to city. The dawn of the modern world had come.

In the city of Florence, circumstances and climate were singularly favourable to the new movement. Florence was the city of flowers; it lay upon the banks of the Arno, set amidst orange groves, and its palaces, art galleries, and churches, when the vineyards were in full bloom, looked like a string of pearls lying in a cup of emeralds. All that Athens had been to the age of Pericles, Florence was to be to the era of Savonarola. Neither time nor events have availed to lessen the hold of Florence upon the great men of earth. Because of her rich associations with genius and beauty, the greatest souls of the earth have often turned feet toward Florence, as the birds of paradise leave the desert to seek out the oasis with its fountain and flowers. Florence was the city of Dante with his *Divine Comedy*, the city of Giotto, with his tower, of Ghiberti, with the

Renaissance of Conscience

gates of wrought iron that are so beautiful that Michael Angelo said they were worthy to be the gates of Paradise. To Florence in after years went Robert Browning, to write *The Ring and the Book*, and Elizabeth Barrett, with the finest love sonnets in literature. To Florence centuries later went George Eliot, to write her *Romola*, and in Florence, Keats and Shelley dreamed their dreams of song and verse. To Florence came Cavour, the statesman, and Mazzini, the reformer, Garibaldi, the soldier, to build the new Italy. Many the scholar and patriot who has said with Robert Browning, "Italy is a word graven on my heart." And it was to Florence that there came in the year 1490 Savonarola, the greatest moral force the city ever knew.

Savonarola was a man of almost universal genius. He was an orator, and the fire of his eloquence still burns in the sermons he has left the world. He was a reformer, and descended upon the sins of his age like a flame of fire, shaking Italy like the stroke of an earthquake. He was a prophet, and he dreamed dreams of a new Italy and of a golden age in morals. He was a statesman and he was created a preacher, and he fulfilled the dreams of a divine Orpheus, who

Savonarola

drew all things to him by the mystery and magic of his speech. He was a martyr, and wore, not the red hat of the cardinal, but the fire that belonged to the chariot of flame, in which his soul rode up to Heaven to meet his God. Like all men of the first order of genius he was great on many sides. It was his glory that he awakened the moral sense and brought the life of God into the soul of man. Savonarola was like the Matterhorn or the Breithorn that lift their peaks so high that they look out upon the Rhine of the north and the Po of the south, upon the vineyards of France and the valleys of Austria.

In the very year that Constantinople fell, and the scholars fled, carrying their manuscripts—as sparks fly from the hammer falling upon an anvil—Savonarola entered into being in the beautiful little city of Ferrara. His grandfather was a physician, a teacher of the youth of his town, and a member of the council. He had achieved some honour as a scholar, and won much gold and favour as a skillful surgeon. To his father's house came a few leading men of the villages round about to read the pages of Dante and to talk about the manuscripts that had thrown all Italy into a fever of excitement. The boy had a hungry mind, and rose early and sat up late to read

Renaissance of Conscience

the copies of the few books that his father had in the little library. His native town was the capital of the little state, and the Duke of Este was his father's friend. When the boy was six years of age, Pope Pius II passed through Ferrara on his way to a celebration in Venice, and in preparation for his coming a crimson canopy was stretched above the street, while in the public square a throne was erected, and when the Pope had taken his seat therein a procession of children passed by, strewing flowers at the feet of the Pope. Young men and women sang songs in his honour, and chanted hymns of his praise, midst clouds of golden incense filling all the air. On the outskirts of the crowd stood the miserable poor, the half-starved peasants, the ragged children, the miserable lepers. Their faces were gaunt, their eyes hollow, their bread, crusts, their garments, rags, and the spectacle of gluttony, drunkenness and luxury, in contrast with the vast multitude of starving poor, created such a revulsion in the mind of the boy that from that hour all should have known that it was only a question of time when this gifted youth would become an ascetic and a reformer.

The revulsion in the heart of Savonarola was inevitably deepened by the lust and cruelty laid to the door of the Church itself.

Savonarola

That was a dark hour for the Papacy and Italy. Paul II was a Venetian merchant, greedy, ambitious, who, in middle age, saw that the Pope was incidentally an ecclesiastic, but essentially an emperor, a statesman and a banker. Everything he touched in business turned to gold. He had agents out in all the world buying diamonds, pearls, rubies and emeralds. He hired architects, sculptors and painters, and made the church an art gallery. "Once the church had wooden cups and plates for the communion, but golden priests. Now," wrote Savonarola, "the church has golden cups and plates, but wooden-headed priests." The Rome of that time was a Rome of art and vice, gold and blood, cathedrals and mud huts. The least shocking page in the papal history of the time describes Alexander VI, and his son Cæsaire and his daughter Lucretia, standing in the open window of the papal palace, looking down into the courtyard, filled with unlucky criminals. These prisoners, sentenced to death, ran round and round the court, while Cæsaire let fly his arrows, and the Pope and Lucretia applauded each lucky hit. The scene is one of many, and the knowledge of such scenes inevitably brought about rebellion in the soul of Savonarola.

Renaissance of Conscience

At the beginning of his career, the young reformer attracted but little attention. He entered a monastery and became a monk, and his novitiate was chiefly marked by a fervour of humilities. He sought the most menial offices, and did penance for his sins by the severest austerities. He was soon worn to a shadow, but his gaunt features were beautified by an expression of singular force and benevolence. Luminous dark eyes sparkled and flamed beneath his thick brows and his large mouth was as capable of gentle sweetness as of power and set resolve. But the spectacle of the sensualism, drunkenness, cruelty, theft, ignorance and wretchedness of Florence, that had a handful of aristocrats at one extreme and thousands of paupers at the other, gradually filled his soul with burning indignation. He began to see visions and to make prophecies which afterward were mysteriously fulfilled. His first success as a preacher came when he was thirty-one and the following year at Brescia, in a sermon on the Apocalypse, he shook men's souls by his terrible picture of the wrath to come. A halo of light was reported to have been seen about his head, and when, six years later, he returned to Florence, to preach in the cathedral, his fame as an orator had gone before him and the cloister

Savonarola

gardens were too small to contain the crowds that flocked to hear him.

The occasion of his first sermon in the cathedral was one long remembered in the city. The vast multitudes saw a gaunt figure whose thick hood covered the whole head and shoulders. From deeply sunken eye-sockets there looked out two eyes that blazed as with lightning. The nose was strong and prominent, with wide nostrils, capable of terrible distention under the stress of emotion. The mouth was full, with compressed, projecting lips, and large, as if made for a torrent of eloquence. The speaker was a visionary, and a seer. At one moment he melted his audience to tears, at another he stirred them to horror, again quickening their souls with prayer and pleadings, that had in them the sweetness of the very spirit of Christ. Soon the walls of the church reëchoed with sobs and wailings, dominated by one ringing voice. One scribe explains fragments of the sermon with these words: "Here I was so overcome with weeping that I could not go on." The poet, Mirandola, tells us that Savonarola's voice was like a clap of doom: a cold shiver ran through the marrow of his bones, and the hair of his head stood on end as he listened. The theme that morning was this: "Repent! A judgment of

Renaissance of Conscience

God is at hand. A sword is suspended over you. Italy is doomed for her iniquity." The speaker prophesied coming bloodshed, the ruin of cities, the trampling down of provinces, the passage of armies, and the devastating wars that were about to fall on Italy.

The great man of Florence at this moment was Lorenzo the Magnificent. Lorenzo was the most powerful figure in Italy, the most widely-travelled, and the richest man of his time. Tiring of luxury and flattery, he was ambitious to be called the patron of art and literature. He had fitted up a great banqueting-room in his palace, in which he could assemble painters, sculptors, architects, actors, poets, philosophers. His seat at the head of the table was after the fashion of a throne, and he had made himself a kind of dictator in the realm of learning. Always open to flattery, he was surrounded by a group of citizens who never ceased burning incense at the altar of his egotism. He was at once a politician, a poet, an amateur actor, dramatist, and singer. At his table sat Ficino, who translated Plato's works into Latin, and Pico della Mirandola, who was the idol of Florentine society. It was the latter's boast that a single reading fixed in his memory any language, any essay or poem, and made it his

Savonarola

forever. Other guests were Leo Alberti and Leonardo, the two men of comprehensive genius in all the group that lived in the palace of the Prince. Constant adulation made Lorenzo arrogant and vain to the last degree. In disguise he led a group of dissipated young men in the carnival fêtes. He wrote licentious carnival songs and so degraded were his followers that they went everywhither shouting his praises as a poet superior to Dante. And when, in July of the following year, Savonarola was elected Prior of St. Mark's, Lorenzo sent messengers to him, bidding him to show more respect to the head of the State.

Savonarola refused to do so. One day the Prince was seen walking in the garden of the monastery. An attendant came in to Savonarola, and announced that Lorenzo the Magnificent was in the garden. "Does he ask for me?" "No," replied the young monk. "Then let him walk." Shortly afterward the Prince sent a deputation to wait on the new Prior, telling him that it was not good form to preach against the Prince, who was the patron of St. Mark's, to which Savonarola replied, "Did I receive my position from Lorenzo, or from Almighty God?" Savonarola's eyes blazed, and he spake in tones of

Renaissance of Conscience

thunder and the answer was, "From Almighty God." "Then," went on the Prior, "to Almighty God will I render homage."

Lorenzo, as it chanced, was drawing near to the end of his life. One day a messenger came from the palace announcing his dangerous illness. Because Lorenzo had usurped the liberties of his country, had robbed and oppressed his own people, Savonarola would not go. Then a second messenger came, saying that the Prince was dying and asked absolution. The Prior found the Prince propped up upon velvet pillows, and lying in a great silken chamber. All his life long, Lorenzo had been accustomed to soft words and pliant service. Now this stern prophet of duty towered above his couch like a messenger of God. The Prior told him absolution could not be granted except upon certain conditions. "Three things are required of you; you must have a full and lively faith in God's mercy; you must restore your ill-gotten gains; you must restore liberty to Florence." Twice the Prince assented, but the third time his face went white. He shivered, as if in fear, and at length, in silence, he turned his face toward the wall. Savonarola turned his back. He would not grant absolution. Lorenzo died. The news was spread through the city by the

Savonarola

relatives and servants standing about the bedside of the dead Prince. The event heaved the soul of Florence as the tides heave the sea.

The Prior was now the most influential man in Italy. His sermons took on a new boldness, and his denunciation of vices filled the city with excitement. Ever increasing his power as a preacher, he now added certain addresses as a patriot. He hated the tyranny of the Medici with an undying hatred. Taking upon himself full responsibility, he sent a letter of welcome to Charles VIII and his French army, believing that if Florence opened her gates to the French, the Florentines might recover their own liberty. Having expelled the family of the Medici, he found it necessary to write a constitution for Florence, and his influence in shaping that constitution was the most powerful influence exerted in that critical time. Leaving to others the task of writing the code, he told the people plainly that, of necessity, a government by one man strengthened the single ruler toward despotism and autocracy, while self-government, through the choice of representatives, worked for the diffusion of strength and responsibility. He proposed a grand council of 3,000 citizens appointed by the city judges, a body that answers to our House of Representatives,

Renaissance of Conscience

and another superior council of eighty citizens, all over forty years of age, who, in turn, were to share with the magistrates the task of appointing the higher officers of the State. Then he brought about a reform of taxation, full amnesty for political offenders, made usury a treasonable act, founded a bank that loaned money to the poor on their character and to the rich on their collateral.* He organized a movement against licentious plays, against luxury, extravagance, ostentatious dress and houses. And when the exiled princes made an alliance with the Pope, he denounced the crimes of the Papacy.

Little by little, a great moral revival swept over Florence and Italy, a revival that culminated in the coming together of the Florentines in the public square, where the people threw upon a blazing fire their vanities, with all the implements of gambling, fraud, and trickery, of vice and drunkenness. Without being himself an ascetic, without making any sweeping attack upon pleasure through music or the drama, Savonarola was an opponent of every form of sensuality, and the gilded vices that undermine sound morals. He was first of all a preacher, changing men's lives and, incidentally, stating the reasons for their personal reformation. Luther changed men's

Savonarola

thinking first, and showed men why this was wrong, and that was right, and therefore wrought fundamental changes. But Savonarola was less of a thinker and more of an evangelist. 'He had all the action of Demosthenes, all the earnestness of Peter the Hermit, all the voice, the gestures and the manner of Whitefield. He believed that the inevitable end of sin was the Inferno of Dante, and therefore his language was full of fire, his voice full of tears, and he plead with men to flee from Vanity Fair as Lot fled from Sodom.'

His uncompromising spirit had long since aroused the hatred of political adversaries as well as of the degraded court of Rome. Even now, when his authority was at its height, when his fame filled the land, and the vast cathedral and its precincts lacked space for the crowds flocking to hear him, his enemies were secretly preparing his downfall. From the beginning it was plain that Socrates was fighting a losing battle against the wicked judges of Athens. From the beginning it must have been plain to Dante that his cunning and insidious foes, who felt that he alone stood between them and their own enrichment, would drive him an exile from Florence. And when Savonarola came into collision with Pope

Renaissance of Conscience

Alexander VI, it was like a bird of paradise going up against some Gibraltar of granite and steel.

Pope Alexander's two ambitions were the advancement of his family and the strengthening of his temporal power. It was Alexander who, knowing that the Sultan had a rival in the person of the young Prince Djem, seized the young noble and put him in jail, on condition that forty thousand ducats yearly should be paid for his jail fee. It was to Alexander that, later, the Turk sent dispatches offering three hundred thousand ducats if he would do away with the youth. History has extenuated many of the crimes of Alexander, but this traffic in murder for the Turks can never be forgiven. It was Alexander also who made impossible liberty of the press, by forcing printers to submit their books to the control of archbishops. It was Alexander who maintained a harem in the Vatican. It was Alexander whose spies were in every inn, in every village. His secret agents were in all the audiences of Savonarola. Alexander looked upon the Prior as a traitor, disloyal and dangerous to the Papacy. At first he sent agents to Florence, and offered bribes to Savonarola, asked if he would accept a cardinal's hat, and invited him to Rome to visit

Savonarola

the Vatican. Savonarola answered by redoubling his attacks. He called Rome a harlot church, till the Pope ordered his excommunication. And at length, becoming alarmed for their city, the magistrates of Florence forbade Savonarola's preaching, and closed the cathedral to his work.

Retiring to St. Mark's, the great leader wrote letters to the crowned heads of Europe, and called for a general council. He reviewed the crimes of which the Pope had been guilty, and the list of vices was long and black. His letters to various princes were intercepted, and taken to Alexander. Then agents, with large sums of money, were sent to Florence to organize a movement to destroy the Prior. Every conceivable plot was organized against him, but he escaped poison, the knife, and the assassin's club. His enemies challenged him to the ordeal by fire, and when he asked that he might be allowed to carry the crucifix and the sacrament in his hand they withdrew the challenge. Thrown into prison, the inquisitors subjected him to the most cruel torture. He was drawn up to the ceiling by a rope fourteen times, and then suddenly dropped, until muscles, tendons and bones were all but torn from their sockets. He was denied food and water and sleep. And finally

Renaissance of Conscience

his reason gave way. Bodily pain so injured and inflamed the brain that it refused its action. Among his last words were the words of the dying Saviour, "In thee, O Lord, have I trusted. Let me never be confounded."

When he was condemned to the flames, he appealed to the government of Florence, but the rulers hastened to support the papal decree, and insisted upon the execution of the sentence. On the morning upon which he was to die, the great public square in Florence was crowded with citizens. Multitudes who had wept during his sermons and whose lives had been changed by his teachings, stood in grief and trepidation around the funeral pyre, just as the multitudes in Jerusalem stood in fear about the cross of Christ. In pronouncing the sentence of death, the bishop of Verona, overwhelmed with fear and confusion, said, "I separate thee from the Church militant and the Church triumphant." To which Savonarola answered, "From the Church militant, yes, but from the Church triumphant, that is not given unto you." The soldiers pushed the lowest dregs of the city, thieves, drunkards, diseased criminals, close to his scaffold, and encouraged them to assail him with vile words and vile deeds. At ten o'clock of the 23d of May, 1498, his

Savonarola

enemies achieved his death. Like Elijah he ascended unto heaven in a chariot of fire. But soon thereafter the guilty leaders of the Church discovered that his work had just begun. He had aroused the conscience of the people, who followed Luther in a revolt against the sale of indulgences that gave the right for the crime and sin. His assertion of personal liberty put strength into Luther's arm and faith into the heart of Calvin. Erasmus borrowed from Savonarola his teachings of reasonableness and light. In exalting the Bible as the final source of authority, he had enthroned that Book and the teachings of Jesus above all popes and cardinals and bishops. Practical men, Galileo, and Bacon, and Erasmus, and Tyndale, borrowed courage from his life and writings. And to this day the influence of this preacher, prophet, martyr, is still potent, not alone in Italy, but throughout the world.

III

WILLIAM THE SILENT (1533-1584)

And Brave Little Holland

BE the reasons what they may, liberty owes much to little lands and confined peoples. Go back to any age and continent, place side by side a little nation and a large one, and if the first has made for liberty and progress, the second has often made for bondage and superstition. For the beginnings of morals and religion we go back, not to that widely extended state named Babylon, but to little Palestine, shut in between the desert and the deep sea. For the beginnings of art and culture we go not to the vast, rich plains of Asia Minor, but to that little rocky land named Greece. For the beginnings of the republic we go not to the sunny plains of Italy, but to the narrow valleys between the Alpine Mountains. What great contribution to civilization has Russia made to the world? But the little Swiss Republic has given us the international postal system, international arbitration and the referendum. Commerce owes a great debt to little Venice. Modern bank-

William the Silent

ing owes a great debt to little Scotland. Asia and Africa owe a great debt to little England. And though Holland was a narrow strip of land but twenty miles wide and one hundred miles long, yet the world can never repay the debt it owes to this mother of republics.

For lovers of liberty the most sacred spot in modern Europe is the square of the Binnenhof at The Hague. A tablet there records the words with which William the Silent challenged Philip II—words that were first made the foundation of the Dutch Republic, words that our pilgrim fathers took as the basis of their New England institutions.

“We declare to you that you have no right to interfere with the conscience of any one so long as he has done nothing to work injury to another person or public scandal.”

We can never forget that Holland gave the founders of our Republic their shelter, with safety and leisure for working out their dreams and visions of self-government. But a full century before the Pilgrim Fathers set foot in Leyden, Holland had become a shelter to foreign exiles, and her citizens had pledged themselves to a deathless hatred of all forms of tyranny. To the cities of Holland had fled those men who were denied liberty of thought

Brave Little Holland

in Paris and Nuremburg. To Holland had come the victims of oppression in Venice and Florence. It was in Holland that the great Humanist had lived and died, that scholar and philosopher Erasmus, who wrought as powerfully for reform in religion as Huss and Savonarola. It was Erasmus who forged the intellectual weapons used by Luther in Germany, and Calvin in Geneva. It was Erasmus who first made a correct text for the Greek Testament. It was Erasmus who put the Bible into the common languages of Europe. And it was a group of Dutchmen who first demanded the separation of Church and State. Two generations before William Bradford gathered his little band in Leyden, William the Silent stood forth to challenge the divine right of kings.

John Ruskin once called attention to the fact that as every great art-age has been a reaction from an era of unendurable ugliness, so every movement for liberty has been a reaction precipitated by unwonted tyranny. Certain it is that as Oliver Cromwell represented a rebound from feudalism, and Abraham Lincoln a reaction from the cruelty of slavery, so William the Silent represented a thrilling protest against the crime of a foreign usurper. His career is as romantic and many-

William the Silent

coloured as the career of David, the fugitive, fleeing from Saul, or that of Robert Bruce, hiding in caves and dens from the pursuers who threatened his life. In youth he was the companion of kings, but he became the champion of the people against their king, the idol of his followers, and the hero of a lost cause. Like David, he knew the weariness and painfulness of the exile's lot. Like Lincoln, he had a face furrowed with anxiety, and fell a victim to the assassin's bullet. Reared in luxury, the heir to titles and vast estates, the head of a dynasty, whose blood still flows in the veins of Europe's rulers, for the cause of liberty he resigned his rank, that he might serve the poor and oppressed. He was a statesman, and had the foresight that organizes out of defeat, and is unconquerable because it never knows when it is defeated. He was a reformer, and attacked injustice and despotism in an era when of necessity his labours were fruitless. He was a soldier, and had the personal daring and the strong arm that count for more than strategic skill. He was a hero, and though daily the hired poisoners sought entrance to his palace, and assassins ever dogged his steps upon the streets, despite the six attempts upon his life, he maintained his courage and his boundless hope. In an age

Brave Little Holland

when society had not yet doubted the divine right of kings, William of Orange fronted Philip II with a denial of this citadel of tyranny and injustice, affirmed the principle that the creed of a nation and the creed of individuals is a matter of their own choice and their own conscience.

Our libraries hold no more instructive volumes than Motley's story of the Netherlands, their rise to material prosperity and their struggle for liberty under the leadership of this man known as William the Silent. The tale of their slow growth as a maritime nation is an epic of indomitable courage in the face of every conceivable form of obstacle. We see these people for the sake of liberty retreating from the rich plains of central Europe into the morass that the Roman historian said was "neither land nor water." With infinite labour they built barriers and dikes against the North Sea, developed a system of veins and arteries through which they compelled the ocean to fertilize their fields, and constructed watery highways for carrying their commerce into distant lands. At length a region outcast of earth and ocean alike "wrestled from both domains their richest treasure." Brave cities floated mermaid-like upon the bosom of the sea. Stand-

William the Silent

ing upon the canal boats, travellers looked down upon cattle grazing below the level of the ocean, beheld orchards and gardens whose tree-tops scarcely reached the level of the waves. Unconsciously this race that had struggled so long and victoriously over storms and seas was educating itself for the struggle with the still more savage despotism of man.

With intelligence and enterprise came the development of trade, and in the fifteenth century the Hollanders became the carriers of the world's commerce. Their ships and their sailors made their way around into the Baltic, to the ports of all northern Europe, to the ports of France and Spain, of Genoa and Naples and Venice, to Constantinople and Alexandria, and from thence south into all countries and continents. As bees flitting from orchard to orchard fertilize the fruit, so these ships passing from port to port and continent to continent fertilized the minds of men. Returning home they brought bulbs, roots and seeds that soon made Holland the gayest flower-garden in Europe and the home of modern floriculture and horticulture. From the Far East they brought the suggestion of movable types. The bleached linens, the tapestries and woollen goods of Holland won fame throughout the world. The homes

Brave Little Holland

of her burghers were models of comfort and even luxury. Small merchants of Amsterdam and Leyden and Rotterdam became merchant princes. Weavers and spinners of linen and silk, workers in iron, as well as silver and gold, left the other lands of Europe and settled in the Dutch seaports.

In that little strip of land were inclosed 208 walled cities and 6,300 villages guarded by a belt of sixty fortresses. Little wonder that Spain looked longingly toward this people and meditated plans for breaking down its fortresses, subjugating its peoples and transferring its accumulated treasure from the chests of the burghers to the vaults of the Spanish dons and cavaliers. And when at length it began to look as if the scepter of the sea might pass from Spain to Holland, King Philip and his soldiers, under Bloody Alva, resolved to draw a circle of fire around little Holland and rob her of the treasure she had so slowly earned.

Fully to understand the heroic struggle of the Hollanders under William of Orange, we must know the immediate cause of the controversy and the source of the tyranny they opposed. That cause was the Inquisition and the tyranny was that of Spain's ambitious rulers. At the moment of the outbreak, Spain

William the Silent

was the richest and the most powerful nation in Europe. Victorious in Africa and Italy, her emperor had carried war into France and now reigned over Germany as well as those provinces now known as Belgium and Holland. If we ask from whence Spain derived the money for these wars of conquest the answer is found in the vast treasure she acquired in the New World. Prescott tells us that when the Spanish soldiers captured the capital of Peru, the soldiers spent days in melting down the golden vessels which they found in the vaults of temples and palaces. In that era, when the yellow metal was worth so much, a single ship carried to Spain \$15,500,000 in gold, besides vast treasures of silver and jewels. When Cortez approached the palace of Montezuma the king's messengers met the general bearing gifts from their lord. These gifts included 200 pounds (avoirdupois) of gold for the leader and two pounds of gold for each soldier. The full value of the treasure that Spain carried from the cities and states of the New World will, doubtless, never be known.

But it must be remembered that the Spanish soldiers who went into Mexico and Peru turned those two countries into a wilderness. For a full half-century these brutal soldiers,

Brave Little Holland

burning with avarice, went everywhither, looting towns, pillaging cities, butchering the people, lifting the torch upon cottage and palace alike. The awful anguish and suffering that Spain wrought upon the helpless people of Mexico and Peru is one of the bloodiest chapters in history. The eagle pouncing upon the dove, the panther leaping upon the young fawn, but faintly interpret to us the savage cruelty of the Spaniard as he raged through the new world. And when the Spanish ships came home, laden with gold and silver the Emperor found means to prosecute his plans for military conquest. Spanish armies were soon marching into northern Italy, into Austria and Germany, into France and finally into Holland. Flushed with victory and greedy of Holland's treasures, Philip determined to punish these people for their refusal to vote supplies to his army, by establishing there the Inquisition by the sword.

The Inquisition, that mediæval instrument for the detection of punishment of disbelievers in the established Church, had existed in all its horrible malignity for two hundred and fifty years. But it remained for Philip of Spain to make its name forever a byword and a hissing in the mouth of history. He had

William the Silent

begun by employing it against the wealthy Jews and Moors, who made up the richest, the most intelligent and prosperous classes in Spain. During the first few years after its institution the Spanish population fell from 10,000,000 to 7,000,000. In eighteen years Torquemada burned 10,220 persons and confiscated the property of 97,321 others. Primarily, the Inquisition was a machine to search men's secret thoughts. It arrested on suspicion, "tortured for confession and then punished with fire." One witness brought a victim to the rack, and two to the flames.

The trial took place at midnight in a gloomy dungeon dimly lighted by torches. Lea tells us "the Grand Inquisitor was enveloped in a black robe with eyes glaring at his victim through holes cut in the hood." Preparatory to examination, the victim, whether man, maiden or matron, was stripped and stretched upon a bench, after which all the weights, pulleys, and screws by which "tendons could be strained without cracking, bones crushed without breaking, body tortured without dying, were put into operation." When condemnation was pronounced the tongue was mutilated so that the victim could neither speak nor swallow. When the morning came, a breakfast with rare delicacies was

Brave Little Holland

placed before the sufferer and with ironical invitation he was urged to satisfy his hunger. Then a procession was formed, headed by the magistrates, prelates and nobility, and the prisoner was led to the public square, where an address was given, lauding the Inquisition, condemning heresy and warning the people against want of subjection to the Pope and the Emperor. Then while hymns were sung, blazing fagots were piled about the prisoner until his body was reduced to a heap of ashes.

Such was the devilish institution Philip of Spain determined to set up in Holland as a means of accomplishing his twofold aim, the punishment of "disbelievers" and the despoiling of the Dutch burghers' treasure-chests. Little wonder that even this sturdy folk drew back from the thought in horror. They were not a people to submit to such barbarities as they had already proved, by giving shelter to foreign exiles. When the Inquisition was first inaugurated in Spain, and men first stretched upon the rack as heretics, Holland had opened her doors to the fugitives, who fled alike from the wrath of kings and priests. All over the world, with its darkness and superstition, its cruelty, its flames, its racks and thumbscrews, men of independent minds had secretly turned their

William the Silent

thoughts toward little Holland, and their steps toward the seaports where the Dutch merchants bought and sold the treasures of the sea. So, now, there developed in the Netherlands a united protest, representing tens of thousands of people, who deserted the churches ruled by the officials of the Inquisition. These protestors went into the open air beyond the city walls where they sang songs, and listened to the preaching of the reformed ministers. Soon the Roman Catholics under the guidance of the Spanish army, and the Protestants under William of Orange, stood over against one another like two castles with cannon shotted to the muzzle. And finally the storm broke, and the protestors went into the churches their own hands had built, and covered the floor with rubbish of broken statues, effigies, and images, cleansing the walls with axe and hammer and broom, and leaving only the pulpit for the teacher, and the plain pews for the worshippers.

The spark which finally set aflame the powder-magazine of men's hearts was the entrance into Holland, in 1567, of the Duke of Alva, at the head of twenty thousand of Spain's finest troops. Bloody Alva was the most accomplished and capable general in Europe. He had been victorious in cam-

Brave Little Holland

paigns in Africa, Italy, France and Germany. He has been called the most bloodthirsty man who ever led troops to battle, and he was sent to Holland to satiate his wolfish instincts. His army included 6,000 horsemen, notorious for the cruelty with which they had butchered their captives in the Italian campaigns. Alva promised to turn these human wolves loose upon the sheep of Holland. Having arrived in Antwerp and established himself in the citadel, his first act was to organize the "Bloody Council." This monster, whose cruelty was never equalled by any savage beast, announced that if in the Roman era the Emperor contented himself with the heads of a few leaders, leaving the multitude in safety, *he* would order the death of the multitude, naming a few who were to be permitted to live. Soon the streets were filled with dead bodies. Not content with hanging, burning, and beheading the leaders, Alva hung the corpses beside the road as a warning against free-thinking.

In seven brief years this man brought charges of heresy, treason and insubordination against 30,000 inhabitants. He boasted that he had executed 18,600, while the number of those who had perished by battle, siege, starvation and butchery defied all computa-

William the Silent

tion. And the more the people rebelled, the more cruel were the methods he devised to torment them. To the gallows he added the stake and the sword. Men were beheaded, roasted before slow fires, pinched to death with hot tongs, broken on the wheel, flayed alive. On one occasion the skins of leaders were stripped from the living bodies and stretched upon drums for beating at the funeral march of their brethren to the gallows. The barbarities committed during the sacking of starving villages, Motley tells us are beyond belief. "Unborn infants were torn from the living bodies of their mothers; women and children were violated by thousands; whole populations burned and hacked to pieces by soldiers, and every mode which cruelty in its wanton ingenuity could desire."

Such was the administration of the man of whom it was said: "He possessed no virtues, while the few vices he had were colossal." To Philip, Bloody Alva explained his failure to subdue the Hollanders by the statement that his "rule had been too merciful."

Over against this human monster, with his implacable hatreds and his bestial cruelties, stands William of Orange, the champion of liberty and the saviour of the Netherlands. By a strange coincidence, the first vivid

Brave Little Holland

picture we have of this prince who gave up a life of ease and luxury to defend the rights of his fellow men, is the scene at the abdication of Charles V, when, in the presence of a great multitude at Brussels, that ruler turned over the sovereignty of the Netherlands to his son, young Philip II of Spain. William of Orange was then a youth of twenty-two, a stadtholder, or imperial governor, of three rich provinces, and the commander of the official army on the French frontier.

“Arrayed in armour inlaid with gold,” says the historian, “with a steel helmet under his left arm, he looked the picture of noble manhood.” Beside him, as he fronted the assemblage, stood young Philip, a youth of twenty-eight, dressed in velvet and gold, but physically ill-shapen and already an object of dislike and distrust. Impressive indeed the contrast between these two young men, destined in a few short years to be pitted against each other like gladiators in the long struggle for liberty. “The one had a genius for government, the other possessed a talent for misgovernment. William of Orange had a passion for toleration; Philip II had a passion for crushing every form of toleration.” Sovereign at twenty-eight, Philip was already a prey to that consuming ambition which, with

William the Silent

his fierce bigotry, was soon to win him universal hatred.

How different this young prince William, with his godlike physique, his perfect balance of heart and intellect, his conscience that could not endure the thought of tyranny. Little wonder that men loved him. In person most elegant, in manners most accomplished, he had been educated by his mother, Juliana of Stolberg, a woman of rare abilities and deeply religious character. As a *grand seigneur*, with great estates and a brilliant retinue, he had known every temptation of wealth and luxury. But neither the flattery of his friends nor the adulation of his followers had sapped his manhood. He was already a seasoned soldier, and almost at once he was to win fame as a diplomatist. We see him serving at the head of his troops throughout one more campaign; then, at the age of twenty-six, acting as one of the three plenipotentiaries at the treaty of Cateau-Cambrésis. Sent to France as hostage for the fulfillment of this treaty, we find him the cynosure of all men's eyes at the greatest and most brilliant court of the day. Little here to warn those arch-plotters, Henry of France and Philip of Spain, that he was soon to become their deadliest foe. Yet already he was meditating re-

Brave Little Holland

bellion against the horrors they were planning. And soon he was to give up all thoughts of court distinction, and go forth to organize peasants and rebels into an army, besieging his own castle in the cause of liberty.

It was while he was still at the French court that the incident took place which gave him his title of William the Silent. The peace between Henry and Philip had just been concluded, with one purpose in view as advised by cardinals and priests. "Both sovereigns were to massacre the Protestants in their dominions, and in the Netherlands the Spanish troops were to be employed for this special purpose." The Duke of Alva was in the secret, and King Henry supposed that William of Orange was also. One day while hunting, with William riding at his side, Henry of France unfolded the horrible scheme. The young prince heard him without a word. He had not been told of the project, but he betrayed his ignorance by no sign of speech or gesture. Henry assumed that he approved of the awful butchery. No man was ever more grievously in error. From that moment William of Orange knew that his call had come, from that hour he meditated his withdrawal from the political parties of the guilty leaders. And when at length the martyr fires were

William the Silent

kindled in Holland, and the Inquisition, under Bloody Alva, began its hellish tasks of "Church discipline" William of Orange sold his plate and jewels, abandoned the great estates he had inherited, and throwing in his lot with the common people, went to the defense of the Netherlands in the struggle for liberty of thought.

William had already intervened, at the risk of his life, on more than one occasion of strife and bloodshed. But the harshness with which the laws against heretics were now carried out, the presence of Spanish troops, the filling up of ministerial offices by Spaniards and other foreigners was stirring the whole country, and presently his own son, studying at the University of Louvain, was seized and carried off to Spain. William himself was outlawed and his property confiscated. Finding that he had been for years the real head of the movement for liberty, Alva, as Governor-General, now set a price upon his head. It was the darkest hour of the long struggle. In constant danger of assassination, in constant fear of betrayal, unable to convince his own people that the contest could never be won, William wandered from place to place, a fugitive and an exile.

But he never once lost heart or capitulated

Brave Little Holland

to despair. In that hour he seemed to have the strength of ten. He was at once general, statesman, diplomat, financier and saviour of his people. Like David, he went through the forest collecting outlaws and men who had grievances; he organized a score of bands to prey upon the Spanish army; he developed a system of secret service by which he kept spies in Alva's citadel and informed his people of the enemy plans. He raised a little army—saw it defeated—raised another, and saw the crafty Alva refuse to fight until he was forced to allow it to disband. In seven years he organized four such armies, only to be overwhelmed again and again by force of numbers. With peasants armed with pikes and pistols he fought veterans who had guns, cannons and 6,000 horses. Attempt after attempt was a failure, but he would not confess defeat. When all seemed lost, he wrote to his brother, "With God's help, I am determined to go on." And at length, in the face of defeat on land, he turned to the sea and, organizing his little fleet of "Beggars," became a terror to the Spanish galleons.

Fascinating the story of how this term, "the Beggars," came to be the watchword of the Hollanders' revolt. One day when the clouds were at their blackest, the nobles of Brussels

William the Silent

rode in a body to the Duchess Margaret to beseech the withdrawal of the Spanish troops. They came plainly dressed and unarmed, and marching four abreast into the council chamber, petitioned her to suspend the Inquisition. While Margaret, deeply touched, shed tears over the piteous appeal, one of her counsellors, named Berlaymont, spoke scornfully of the petitioners as "a troop of beggars." The dropping of that single word was like the dropping of a spark into a powder-magazine. That night a banquet was held, with three hundred nobles present, and "Long live the Beggars!" rose on every side. Born of a jibe, the name "Beggars" caught the imagination of the people; the revolt spread like wild-fire, and henceforth the phrase became a battle-cry, which was to ring out on every bloody field of the long struggle.

But the battle was only begun. Though the spring of 1572 brought hope, the hope was quickly dashed by the news of the terrible massacre of St. Bartholomew in France. Charles IX had aligned himself with Philip of Spain and was seeking to exterminate the Protestants. And Bloody Alva now redoubled his cruelties in Holland. With incredible ferocity, he attacked and captured the city of Naarden, butchering every man, woman,

Brave Little Holland

and child, and razing every building to the ground. Haarlem was next marked for destruction. The garrison, numbering less than two thousand men, was reinforced by Catherine van Hasselaar and her corps of three hundred women, who handled spade and pick, hot water and blazing hoops of tar during the assaults. Alkmaar came next. Sixteen thousand Spaniards under Don Frederic, Alva's son, began the siege, expecting the town to fall as Haarlem had. But the hated foreigners were met in the breaches by women, boys and girls, who fought with pick, stones, fire and hot water for a full month.

When the brutal Spanish troops threatened to beat the patriots down by sheer force of numbers, the peasants cut their dikes, flooded their own fields and homes and renewed the attack upon the Spaniards from the branches of their orchards and the tops of their houses. Clinging to the dikes by their finger-tips, these people fought their way back into the marshes, where the ground was more solid beneath their feet. No pen can describe and no brush can paint the scenes of this and the other sieges that followed. The history of heroism holds no more impressive spectacle than the sight of these patriots who, in the hour when the siege was suddenly lifted, left

William the Silent

their dead in the streets and went staggering toward the church to give thanks to God and swear anew their hatred of tyranny before their lips had even tasted bread.

The struggle went on for a score of years. Driven out of their homes, with no shelter of tent or stable, fleeing constantly from the enemy, hiding under the slough grass and digging holes in the frozen sand, the patriots perished by the thousands. In winter, when the frost was bitter, and Alva looked out upon ice on every side, he ordered thousands of pairs of skates, that his men might the more easily hunt down the fugitives. At the climax of the struggle William the Silent, worn with excessive labours, his health undermined by weeks and months spent in the swamps and in the dikes, was stricken with fever and all but died. When the illness was at its height and he was only a skeleton, too weak to hold his pen in his hand, able only to whisper dispatches to his messengers, came the news that Leyden, already besieged for months, and now plague-stricken, was about to surrender.

The Spaniards were determined to win this defiant city, for it was the very heart of Holland and the most beautiful city in the Netherlands. It lay below the level of the ocean, protected by great dikes, and its

Brave Little Holland

canals, shaded on either side by lime trees, poplars, and willows, were crossed by one hundred and forty-five bridges. Its houses were beautiful, its public square spacious, its churches imposing. The Spanish commander had built sixty-six forts around the city and so severe was the blockade that no succour by land was possible. There were no troops in the town, save a small corps of freebooters and five companies of the burgher guards. "The sole reliance of the city was on the stout hearts of its inhabitants within the walls, and on the sleepless energy of William the Silent without." William, assuring them of deliverance, had implored them to hold out at least three months, and they had "relied on his calm and unflinching soul as on a rock of adamant." They were unaware of his illness, for he had said nothing of it in his messages, knowing that it would cast a deeper shadow on the city.

When the word reached him that the besieged could hold out no longer, he decided once more to call in the aid of the sea. Leyden lay fifteen miles from the ocean, but the ocean could be brought to Leyden, and though he had no army with which to overwhelm the besiegers he still had his veteran "Beggars" and a tiny fleet of vessels. He determined to

William the Silent

sacrifice the neighbouring countryside, with its houses and villages, its fields and flocks, if only he might save the heroic city and its defenders. On a day in August, the great sluices were opened and the ocean began to pour in over the land. While he still lay desperately ill, waiting for the rising of the waters, his agents were busy assembling a fleet of flat-bottomed boats laden with herring and bread for the starving people.

Meanwhile, within the city all was silence and death. Pestilence stalked everywhere and the inhabitants fell like grass beneath the scythe. The only communication was by carrier pigeons, and only the messages from William kept up the hearts of the defenders. The scenes of tragedy within the walls are not to be described. And by a stroke of evil fate the wind, blowing steadily in the wrong direction, delayed the rising of the waters.

Even in its despair, the city was sublime. At the climax of its sufferings, a committee waited on the burgomaster to advise surrender. He was a tall, haggard, imposing figure, with dark visage and commanding eyes. He waved his broad-leafed hat for silence, and then, to use Motley's words, gave answer, "What would ye, my friends, why do

Brave Little Holland

ye murmur, that we do not break our vows, and surrender the city to the Spaniards—a fate more terrible than the agony which she now endures? I tell you I have made an oath before the city, and may God give me strength to keep my oath! I can die but once; whether by your hands, the enemy's, or by the hand of God. My own fate is indifferent to me; not so that of the city entrusted to my care. I know that I shall starve, if not soon relieved, but starvation is preferable to the dishonourable death which is the only alternative. Your menaces move me not; my life is at your disposal; here is my sword, plunge it into my breast; and divide my flesh among you. Take my body to appease your hunger, but expect no surrender so long as I remain alive."

Then came a gale from the northwest, and when the waters were piled up in huge waves, the ocean swept across the ruined dikes. The flotilla of the "Beggars," that had waited outside, unable to advance, a painted fleet upon a painted ocean, now surged forward in a wild rush to save the city. Spaniards by the hundreds sank beneath the deepening and treacherous flood. The fortress of Alva was destroyed. At midnight the enemy deserted their redoubts and fled, and at daybreak the

William the Silent

ships of William the Silent came through the canals. Soldiers threw bread to the starving citizens, and two hours later every living person who could walk made his way to the church to sing a hymn of deliverance, during which the multitude broke down and wept like children. The day following, the wind shifted to the east, and blew a tempest. "It was," says the historian, "as if the waters having done their work of redemption, had been rolled back by an omnipotent hand, and when four days had passed the land was bare again, and the reconstruction of the dikes well advanced."

Such was the spirit of William the Silent, and his followers. The eventual outcome was inevitable. At length the Spaniards came to see that victory could be bought at one price and one price alone—extermination. From Spain came overtures to William of Orange. His reply is historic: "Peace only upon three conditions: (1) Freedom of worship, (2) A land dedicated to liberty, (3) All Spaniards in civil and military employment to be withdrawn forever." In April, 1576, an act of Union was agreed and signed at Delft, by which supreme authority was conferred upon him. In September of that year William entered Brussels in triumph, as the acknowl-

Brave Little Holland

edged leader of all the Netherlands, Catholic and Protestant alike. And at length, at Utrecht, a federal republic was established, with a written constitution—that republic which was to exist for two hundred years under the motto “by concord little things become great.” William’s struggle was over and the battle won.

But, all unconsciously, the architect of the new republic was moving toward his end. Like Moses, if he had led the people out of the wilderness it was not given him to see the promised land. For years his steps had been dogged by hired assassins. There had scarcely been an hour during his long warfare when bribes and gold were not offered for his death. It was a miracle that he had escaped the dagger, the club and the cup of poison. He was now fifty-one years of age. His portraits exhibit him as a man whose lips were locked with iron, whose face was furrowed with care, his look alert and strained, his air that “of a man at bay, having staked his life and life’s work.” And yet he was one of the most charming of companions, brilliant of address, of so winning a manner that it was said “every time he took off his hat he won a subject from the King of Spain.”

One morning, while writing at his desk, a

William the Silent

young Spaniard who had forged the seals obtained access to the Prince's writing room. Because he had been searched by the guard the visitor was without weapon. But having delivered his forged letter, he asked the Prince for a Bible and the loan of a few crowns. He received a gift of twelve pieces of silver, and went into the courtyard, where, with the Prince's own money, he purchased a pistol from the guard. Thence he returned to find a hiding place in the dark passageway, and to empty three shots into the Prince's breast.

With the death of William the Silent the Netherlands lost their noblest hero, their most sublime patriot, and one of the greatest leaders of all time. Few are the names worthy to be ranked with that of this Prince of the blood who gave his wealth, his strength and finally his life for the cause of liberty. Ruling with a strong hand, he was not a despot; brave, he was not reckless; giant, he was also gentle; warring against the Inquisition, with its thumbscrews and fagots, he held himself back from bloodthirstiness and revenge. The victim of every kind of attack that hate could devise or malignity invent, he never degraded himself by meeting hate with hate or crime with crime. When the long struggle for liberty which he began was brought to an issue,

Brave Little Holland

Spain had buried 350,000 of her sons and allies in Holland, spent untold millions for the destroying of freedom, and sunk from the ranks of the first power in Europe to the level of a fourth-rate country—stagnant in ideas, cruel in government, superstitious in religion. But brave little Holland had emerged to serve forever as a rock against tyranny and a refuge from oppression.

IV

OLIVER CROMWELL (1599-1658)

And the Rise of Democracy in England

SOCIETY'S ingratitude to its heroes and leaders is proverbial. Earth's bravest souls have been misunderstood in youth, maligned in manhood and neglected in old age. The fathers slay the prophets, the children build the sepulchres, and the grandchildren wear deeply the path the heroes trod. History teems with illustrations of this principle. Socrates is the wisest prophet, the noblest teacher, the truest citizen and patriot that Athens ever had, and Athens rewards him with a cup of poison. In a critical hour Savonarola saves the liberty of his city, and Florence burns him in the market-place. Cervantes writes the only world-wide thing in Spanish literature, and for an abiding place Spain rewards him, not with a mansion, but with a blanket in a dungeon, feeds him, not upon the apples of Paradise, but on the apples of Sodom, and gives him to drink, not the nectar of the gods, but vinegar mingled with gall.

Rise of Democracy in England

Next to the Bible in influence upon English literature comes the *Pilgrim's Progress*. England kept John Bunyan in jail at Bedford for twelve years, as his reward. For some reason, nations reserve their wreaths of recognition until the heart is broken, until hope is dead, and the ambitions are in heaven. The history of the other great leaders, therefore, leads us to expect that the greatest, because the most typical, Englishman of all time, shall be unique in his obloquy and shame, as he was signal in his supreme gifts. During his life the very skies rained lies and cruel taunts; in his death the mildewed lips of slander took up new falsehoods. In the grave the very dust of this hero furnished a sure foundation for the temple of liberty, but his grave was despoiled. With pomp and pageantry Charles the Second ordered his bones to be exhumed, and the skeleton hung between thieves at Tyburn to satisfy his hatred. For twelve years Cromwell's skull was elevated upon a pole above Westminster Hall, where it stood exposed to the rains of twelve summers and the snows of twelve winters.

And now that two hundred and fifty years have passed away, these centuries have not availed for extinguishing the fires of hatred and controversy, or for doing justice to the

Oliver Cromwell

memory of this man, Oliver Cromwell, God's appointed king.

We would naturally expect that time would have availed to clear the name and fame of Cromwell and to secure for him the recognition that his achievements deserve. But it was hard for some royalists to forgive this man who turned his hand against the sacred person of the King. For nearly three centuries the conflict has raged. The royal historians count Cromwell the greatest hypocrite in history, the trickster, the regicide, the political Judas of all time. For a hundred years after his death, no man was found brave enough to mention the name of Oliver Cromwell in Windsor Castle or the House of Lords. England's Abbey has made a place for the statues of that one-talent general, Burgoyne, whose chief business was to surrender his troops to our colonial soldiers, but the Abbey has no niche for a bust of the only English general who ranks with the great soldiers of history—Alexander, Cæsar, Napoleon, Grant, and now Foch—these six and no more.

The British Houses of Parliament are crowded with statues of politicians who gave the people what they wanted, and some statesmen who gave the people what they ought to have. And there, too, are found the busts of

Rise of Democracy in England

kings and queens, Bloody Mary, contemptible John, those little feeblings and parasites named the Georges. But low down and bespattered with mud she has written the name of her greatest monarch, and the most powerful ruler that ever sat upon a throne.

Not until Carlyle came forward did the cloud of slander begin to lift. When the three hundredth anniversary of the birth of Cromwell was celebrated, Great Britain awakened to the fact that too little recognition had been given to the great reformer whose career was one of the marvels of English history. The measure of a nation's greatness is the kind of man it admires. To-day, it is of little consequence what we think of Cromwell, but it is of the first importance that Cromwell should approve the leaders of our world-capitals. Only in the last generation has the tide turned, and the reaction begun to set in. John Morley, busied with his biography of Gladstone, took time to write a history of the man whom he calls the maker of English history. Professor Gardiner asserts that England has done injustice to Cromwell and that the time has come for her to right a great wrong. All the world has at last begun to recognize the fact that the farmer of Huntingdon was an uncrowned king, ruling of his own natural right.

Oliver Cromwell

The world's ingratitude to Cromwell becomes the more striking when we remember what he did for Great Britain, for her people, to right the wrongs of her poor, to found her free institutions and to give her a place among the nations of the earth. Oliver Cromwell found England almost next to nothing in the scale of European politics. France pitied poor little England, and Spain, the one world-wide force of the time, despised her. He found her people a group of quarrelling sects, divided, hostile and full of hate. Her soil was scored with countless insurrections; her commerce was dead; her navy was so miserably weak that pirates sailed up the Thames, dropped anchor in the night in front of Westminster Hall, and flung defiance to the frightened merchants. In a single year, three thousand Englishmen were impressed by these pirates and sold in the slave markets of Algiers, Constantinople and the West Indies. He found the king a tyrant, who one day made the boast that he had brought every man who had opposed his will to the Tower or the scaffold. He found Parliament saying, "We have struggled for twenty years, and every attempt has ended with a halter, and it is better to endure a present ill than flee to others that we know not of."

Rise of Democracy in England

And in the very darkest hour of England's history, this farmer flung himself into the breach and besought his countrymen to unite in one supreme effort to achieve liberty for the common people. For forty years he had been a plain country gentleman, content with his farm; ten years later he was "the most famous military captain in Europe, the greatest man in England, and the wisest ruler England ever had." He lived to hold the destinies of his country in his hands, to en-throne justice and toleration over a great part of Europe, received overtures for alliances from many kings, and died in the royal palace at Whitehall, and was buried amid the lamentations of many who had been his bitter enemies.

Cromwell's greatness stirs our sense of wonder the more, because he accomplished what others had sought to achieve and failed. Balfour or Lloyd George trained for years to his task, is like one who stands in the midst of an arsenal, protected by walls and battlements, and served by cannon and machine guns. To employ Carlyle's expressive figure, a dwarf who stands with a match before a cannon can beat down a stronghold, but he must be a giant indeed who can capture an armed fortress with naked fists, as did Oliver Cromwell.

Oliver Cromwell

He lived in an age of great men. The era of Shakespeare, of Marlowe, Jonson and Bacon was closing. It was the era of John Pym, called "The Old Man Eloquent." It was the era of Hampden, the patrician, the orator and hero. It was the time of Sir Harry Vane, the distinguished gentleman who came to Boston to be made ruler of that new city, and whom Wendell Phillips called the noblest patriot that ever walked the streets of the new capital. Coke was on the bench, meditating his decisions, while Lyttleton was perfecting his interpretations of the Constitution. John Milton was making his plea for the liberty of the press. Owen and Sherlock and Howe were in the pulpits.

These were among the bravest spirits that have ever stood upon our earth. All hated tyranny, and all loved liberty. All sought to overthrow the rule of the despot and yet, when all had done their best, England was sold like a slave in the market-place. It was the farmer of Huntingdon who, in that critical hour, came forward and showed himself equal to the emergency. It was this country gentleman, without political experience, this general who became a statesman without the discipline of statecraft, who became the shepherd of his people and overthrew that citadel

Rise of Democracy in England

of iniquity called the Divine Right of Kings; who rid England of her pirates, developed a great commerce, built up the most powerful navy that then sailed the sea—a possession England has never lost—corrected the code, rectified the Constitution, laid the foundation for the present Bill of Rights. This is why John Morley asks us to study carefully the lineaments of this man whose body England, to her undying shame, and in the days of her dishonour, hung in chains at Tyburn.

If we are to understand Cromwell's character and career and his place among the world's leaders, we must recall his age and time and the England of that far-off day, when he wrought his work and dipped his sword in heaven. What of the religious condition of England in the era of intolerance, when the prophet of God was anointed with the ointment of war, black and sulphurous? It is the year 1630, and Cromwell is still in his early manhood. One bright morning, with St. Paul's to his back, Cromwell entered Ludgate Circus. In the midst of the circus stood a scaffold and around it was a great throng, crowding and pressing toward the place of torture. At the foot of the scaffold was a venerable scholar, his white hair flowing upon his shoulders, a man of stainless char-

Oliver Cromwell

acter and spotless life, renowned for his devotion, eloquence and patriotism. When the executioner led the aged pastor up the steps, the soldiers tore off his garments. He was whipped until blood ran in streams down his back, both nostrils were slit and his ears cropped off, hot irons were brought and two letters, "S-S"—sower of sedition—were burned into his forehead.

What crime had this pastor committed? Perhaps he had lifted a firebrand upon the King's palace; perhaps he had organized some foul gunpowder plot to overthrow the throne itself. Perhaps he had been guilty of treason, or some foul and nameless sin against the State. Not so. The reading of the decision of the judge and the decree of the punishment made clear the truth. It seemed that a fortnight before, the aged pastor had been commanded to give up his extempore prayers and the singing of the Psalms, and had been commanded to read the written prayers and sing the hymns prescribed by the state Church. But the gentle scholar had disregarded the command, and on the following Sunday walked in the ways familiar and dear to him by reason of long association. He had dared to sing the same old Psalms and lift his heart to God in extempore prayer, after the manner

Rise of Democracy in England

of his fathers. And when the executioner announced that on the following Saturday at high noon the old scholar would be brought a second time into Ludgate Circus, and there scourged before the people, the cloud upon Oliver Cromwell's brow was black as the thunder-storm that stands upon the western sky, black and vociferous with thunder. Kings, the head of the Church of Jesus Christ!

Two hundred years later, Abraham Lincoln, standing in the market-place of New Orleans, was to see a coloured child torn from its mother's arms, held by the auctioneer upon the block and sold to the highest bidder. With a lump in his throat, Abraham Lincoln turned to his brother and said: "If the time ever comes when I can strike, I will hit slavery as hard a blow as I can." And when Cromwell turned away from that scene in Ludgate Circus he went home to dream about the era of toleration and liberty and charity, and registered a vow to strike, when the time came, the hardest blow he could against the citadel of intolerance and bigotry on the part of the Church.

But political England was as dark and troublesome as the religious world of that day. One of the noblest men of the time was Sir

Oliver Cromwell

John Eliot. He was the child of wealth and opportunity. The university had lent him culture, travel had lent breadth, and leisure had given him the opportunity to grow wise and ripe. His nature was singularly lofty and devout, his temper ardent and chivalric. His one ambition was to serve his mother country. A vice-admiral, he was given power to defend the commerce of the country and overthrow the pirates. After many attempts, by a clever but dangerous maneuver he entrapped the king of the pirates, Nutt, who had taken one hundred and twenty English ships and sold the sailors in the slave market of Algiers and Tripoli. But King Charles freed the pirate, and punished the vice-admiral by four months' imprisonment, for he had taken bribes against his own sailors.

When Sir John Eliot had been released, he charged the King with complicity in a crime. For reply the King levied an illegal fine. Sir John Eliot was rich, and he might have bought immunity. In his home dwelt a beautiful wife and little children, and with flight he might have escaped his prison. His wealth would have enabled him to live abroad in ease, but he preferred to stay at home and die in London Tower for principle. And no martyr, going to his stake, no hero, falling

Rise of Democracy in England

at the head of a battle line, ever did a nobler thing than Sir John Eliot, when he refused to pay his fine and preferred death to enjoying the pleasures of expediency for a season. For three years the hero bore his imprisonment and endured the tortures of confinement. The rigours of the Tower could not break his dauntless spirit. One day he found blood upon his handkerchief. Fearing that death was near, he sent a request to the royal palace. "A little more air, your majesty, that I may gain strength to die in!" But John Eliot had thwarted the King's policy, and Charles carried his vindictiveness even to death. "Not humble enough," was the King's reply. Blows cannot break the will, waters cannot drown the will, flames cannot consume the will, and in the hour of Eliot's death, Charles knew that his opponent had conquered. One day John Eliot's son petitioned the King that he might carry his father's remains to Cornwall to lie with those of his ancestors. Charles wrote on the petition: "Let Sir John Eliot's body be buried in the parish where he died, and his ashes lie unmarked in the Chapel of the Tower."

But the social England of the era of Cromwell is a darker picture still. If our age is the era of the rise and reign of the common

Oliver Cromwell

people, that was an age when the middle-class was as yet almost unknown. Feudalism still survived. There were the plebeians on the one hand, and the patrician class on the other. Theoretically the King owned the land, and the lords and gentlemen were agents under him. Kenilworth Castle and its lord stand for the social England of that day. My lord dwelt in a castle—the people dwelt in mud huts. He wore purple and fine linen—his people wore coats of sheepskin, slept on beds of straw, ate black bread, knew sorrow by day and misery by night. Did a farmer sow a field and reap the harvest? Every third shock belonged to the lord of the castle. Did the husbandman drive his flocks afield? In the autumn, every third sheep and bullock belonged to my lord. Was the grain ripe in the field? If the peasant owed twenty days' labour without return at the time of sowing to my lord, he had to give ten days more to the lord of the castle in the time of the harvest. Again without recompense. And so it generally came about that for want of proper time to plough and plant and for opportunity of reaping in the hour when his grain was ripe, the serf fronted the winter with an empty granary, and the cry of his children was exceeding bitter.

Rise of Democracy in England

There were few bridges across the streams, there was no glass in the farmer's window, not one in a thousand owned a book, sanitation was almost unknown, every other babe died in infancy; if the upper classes came out of the Black Death almost unscathed, about a third of the peasant class was swept off by that scourge, which the physicians now know was caused by insufficient food and decayed grain. It was an era of ignorance and brutality among the poor, an era of snobs and of criminals. Cromwell found a hundred laws upon the English statute books that involve hanging for petty infringements against the rights of the King. He found woman a chattel and one day saw a man sell his wife in the market-place and beheld the purchaser lead the girl off in a halter. When the traveller rode up to London, he passed between a line of gibbets, where corpses hung rotting in chains. Highwaymen rode even into London, at night-fall, and tied their horses in Hyde Park, robbed people in the streets, broke into stores and rode away unmolested. One advertisement read thus: "For sale, a negro boy, aged eleven years. Inquire at the Coffee House, Threadneedle Street, behind the Royal Exchange."

Drunkenness and gambling were all but uni-

Oliver Cromwell

versal. One Secretary of State was notorious as the greatest drunkard and the most unlucky gambler of his era. A Prime Minister was allowed to appear at the opera house with his mistress, and was esteemed the finest public man of his century. We are face to face with corruption in politics, incompetence in council and paganism in religion. To-day a member of the Cabinet who would use his private information for purposes of gambling in Wall Street would be instantly ruined. But in that era, the King and his courtiers filled their coffers by such methods without any criticism.

In such an era, Cromwell saw that there was no hope for England until there was a middle class. He determined to destroy the castles that offered shelter to the princes who had spoiled and robbed and outraged the poor, who had no defense to which they could flee when they had outraged the law. It has often been said that he was an iconoclast; in razing the castles of England to the ground and overthrowing the strongholds he was the greatest criminal of his age; but if he loved the castles and architecture less, it was because he loved the poor more. He levelled stones down that he might have a foundation upon which the poor could climb up, and

Rise of Democracy in England

thereby he destroyed the strongholds of feudalism and laid the foundations of the Bill of Rights of 1832, and was the forerunner of our own Washington and Lincoln.

Who is this King Charles who stands for the old order, and who is the great representative of the doctrine of the divine right of kings? He was a grandson of Mary, Queen of Scots, who, in fleeing from Scotland, seized the hand of Lord Lindsay, her foe, and holding it aloft in her grasp swore by it, "I will have your head for this, so I assure you." His father was James the First of England and Sixth of Scotland, who had some gifts and also virtues, but who after all was simply an animated stomach, carried far by a handful of intellectual faculties. That Charles the First had qualities denied to his father all must confess. He was gifted with a certain taste for pictures, he had some imagination, and loved good literature. During his imprisonment he read Tasso, Spenser's *Faerie Queen*, and, above all, Shakespeare. He was methodical and decorous, but his favourite essay was Bacon's "Essay on Simulation and Dissimulation." As a diplomat he believed that Machiavelli's *Prince* was the ideal to be followed, in that truth is so precious a quantity that it ought not to be wasted on the common people. He

Oliver Cromwell

was not renowned for chivalry or a sense of gratitude. Witness his foul desertion of Strafford in the hour when Strafford exclaimed: "Put not your trust in princes!"

Again and again, through his selfishness, he spoiled his people. To obtain money he sold to one of his favourites the exclusive right to use sedan chairs in London, and put chains across the streets and made it a criminal offense for a gentleman to drive his coach into the limits of the city. He taxed the shoes the people wore, the salt they ate, the beds on which they slept, and the very windows through which the light came. He hired spies to make out a list of merchants who had an income of more than £2,000 a year and by indirect blackmail obtained money therefrom. When the Black Death broke out, and the streets of London were piled with corpses, and the committee of relief asked for public subscriptions, Charles the First fled to Hampton Court and made no subscription, large or small, to the relief fund.

And how did he amuse himself during those days when every house in London was left desolate? In his far-off palace, surrounded by guards, beyond whom no messenger could pass, Charles the First sat, surrounded by his court. He sent to Amsterdam for jewellers

Rise of Democracy in England

and paid £10,400 for a necklace. He paid £8,000 for a gold collar for himself, and £10,000 for a diamond ring for the Queen. On the ground that Parliament had not imposed taxes sufficient for his expenses, he made a tax proclamation for himself. Then Parliament, led by Pym and Hampden and Eliot, brought in a bill of remonstrance. They assumed that the King ruled under preëxisting laws. They declared that if Charles refused to call a Parliament and arrogated its power to himself, twelve peers might call a Parliament, and if this failed, the citizens might come together through a committee and elect their representatives.

But the King was consumed with egotism and vanity. He sent orders to Parliament to deliver to him the five leaders who stood for the liberties of the people, and with a mob of soldiers he entered the House of Commons to seize Hampden and Pym. But the House refused to give up its members, and helped them to escape through one of the windows, and the next day it brought them back in a triumphal procession. Returning to his palace, the King found the streets crowded with people, silent, sullen, dark with anger. He heard threats and growls from every side. One prophet of righteousness called out, "To

Oliver Cromwell

your tents, O Israel!" Suddenly Charles the First realized that his people, driven to bay, had at last bestirred themselves, and, fearing he might be driven into a corner, his cheek went white as marble. That night, conscious of his danger, he fled to Hampton Court, while the whole city applauded the five leaders who had escaped the snare. He had furnished the dynamite to blow up his throne. The people, represented by Parliament, stood over against the peers, represented by the King, as enemies. It was "either your neck, or my neck," and when a few weeks passed, there began the era of civil war, with blazing towns and castles and strongholds. "Whom the gods would destroy, they first make mad."

But who is the man who shall do for England what Savonarola did for Florence, and Luther for Germany, and William Tell for Switzerland, and Washington and Lincoln for our own country? Oliver Cromwell was of Celtic stock and noble family. It is a singular coincidence that he was a ninth cousin of that Charles whose death warrant he was to sign; that seventeen of his relatives were in Parliament to sign the Great Remonstrance, and that ten of his blood-relatives joined with him in signing the death warrant of the King. Cromwell was sixteen years of age, and enrolled

Rise of Democracy in England

himself as a student at Cambridge on the very day that great Shakespeare died in Stratford. The greatest thing England ever did in literature ended on the day when perhaps the greatest thing she did in action began. John Milton said that Cromwell nursed his great soul in silence and solitude. He was but a child when the news of the Gunpowder Plot filled his father's house with excitement. He was but a child when a dispatch was laid in his father's hands announcing the death of Henry of Navarre, the founder of Protestantism in France. From boyhood he loved the story of the brave and gallant Sir Walter Raleigh, and the announcement that he was to be executed to please the King of Spain filled him with tumultuous indignation.

In appearance he was above medium stature, built like Daniel Webster and Brougham and Beecher, with great, beautiful head, bronzed face, heavy, projecting eyebrows, large forehead, two eyes burning like flames of fire beneath the overhanging cliffs. He was of sandy complexion, like Alexander and Napoleon. But if he were thick set, he was of finely compacted fiber, and this man, who was to deal a crushing blow at Marston Moor, and sign the King's death warrant and "grasp the scepter of a throne" and raze to the

Oliver Cromwell

ground the citadels of iniquity, the old strong castles of feudalism, was also strong enough to lift little England with her six millions to a level with the thirty millions of mighty Spain. Not until he was forty years of age did this farmer enter Parliament. One day, in the House of Commons Sir Philip Warwick, while listening to a sharp voice, said to John Hampden, whose seat was near him: "Mr. Hampden, who is that sloven who spoke just now, for I see he is on our side, by his speaking so warmly?" "That sloven," replied Hampden, "whom you see before you—that sloven, I say—if we ever come to a breach with the King—God forbid—that sloven, I say, would, in that case, be the greatest man in England." But Hampden knew him also as gentle and lovable, tender toward his friends, loved by his rustic neighbours, though this vehement man, with sword stuck close to his side, had stern and uncompromising work, and the most difficult task ever set before an Englishman. "A larger soul, I think," writes Carlyle, "had seldom dwelt in a house of clay than was his."

Much of the criticism of Cromwell that has been so bitter, so rabid and so persistent would at once disappear if it were understood that the central element in Cromwell's life was re-

Rise of Democracy in England

ligion. He was first of all a Puritan, essentially a religious reformer and incidentally a politician. This is the clue to the maze, this is the key to the problem, and the solution to this historical enigma. He was by nature a poet and a prophet, haunted by sublime vision, dreaming of heaven and hell, as did Dante and Bunyan. "Verily," said he, "I think the Lord is with me. I undertake strange things, yet do I go through them to great profit and gladness and furtherance of the Lord's great work. I do feel myself lifted on by a strange force. I cannot tell why. By night and by day I am urged forward in the great work."

Had he lived in the days of Jeremiah, he would have dreamed dreams and seen visions and foretold retribution upon the wrongdoers. Had he lived in the days of Socrates, he would have made much of the voice of God. Had he lived in the time of Bernard the Monk, or Francis of Assisi, he would have dwelt apart from men and fed his soul in solitude. Like John Bunyan, he was a melancholy, brooding, lonely figure, who sometimes fought with Apollyon in the Valley of Humiliation, and sometimes was lifted to the heights of the Delectable Mountains. He was a man of singular sincerity, who confessed like Paul:

Oliver Cromwell

"Oft have I been in hell, and sometimes have I been caught up into the seventh heaven and heard things not lawful to utter." Blackness of darkness on one day, blinding radiance of light on another—both experiences were his. "I think I am the poorest wretch that lives, but I love God, or rather I am beloved of God." There speaks the religious leader, and not the ambitious politician.

"In the whole history of Europe," writes Frederic Harrison, "Oliver Cromwell is the one ruler into whose presence no vicious man could ever come, into whose service no vicious man might ever enter." What an army was that which he collected! When one of his officers was guilty of profanity and vulgarity in his presence, he was immediately dismissed. Cromwell sought out men like John Milton to be associated with him in diplomatic work. "If I were to choose," he writes, "any servant—the meanest officers of the army of the Commonwealth—I would choose a godly man that hath principle, especially where a trust is to be committed, because I know where to find a man that hath principle." He believed, also, and practiced prayer, for more things are wrought by prayer than are dreamed of in man's philosophy. With Tennyson, he held that "with prayer men are bound as with

Rise of Democracy in England

chains of gold about the feet of God.” One day, overpressed with work, he went into the country to spend the night with an old friend. After the Lord Protector had retired, the host heard words, as of one speaking. Standing by the door of Cromwell’s room, in which he feared that some enemy might have found entrance, he heard Cromwell pouring out his heart to God, telling Him that this was not a work that he had taken up for himself; that it was God’s work; that the people were God’s children, and the world God’s world. Little wonder that the modern politician cannot understand Oliver Cromwell, and finds his life full of contradictory elements.

Not all present-day politicians could stand the prayer test. Cromwell was a God-intoxicated man. He believed that the Sermon on the Mount and the law of Sinai were the basis of all political creeds. “We think,” writes the historian, “that religion is a part of life; the Puritan thought it was the whole of life.” That which was morally right could not be politically wrong, that which was politically right could not be morally wrong. The principles of justice and honesty that made the individual life worthy were one with the principles that made national life worthy. Between man and man you expected truth.

Oliver Cromwell

Was it a matter of indifference for the King to lie to his ministers, his people, and his Parliament? Is a king to be excused who broke all pledges, and laid dishonest taxes on his people? These questions were incidentally political questions, but primarily moral problems. And they thrust Cromwell, the religious recluse, into the whirl and turmoil of politics, and made him a soldier and a statesman.

What a study in contrasts is the story of this farmer of Huntingdon! One day Parliament makes remonstrance; it sends the King word that he must call Parliament at regular intervals; that taxes must be voted by Parliament; that in the event of the King's refusing to call a Parliament for the correction of injustice, the peers may issue the call; that if the peers refuse, the judges may issue it, and if the judges play false, the people may come together for election. Hampden, Pym and Cromwell indict the King for wrong and tyranny. Charles gives orders that the five leaders of Parliament shall be delivered to the Keeper of the Tower. The King flees to Hampton Court, and sends the gold plate and the crown jewels to Paris, hires foreign troops, lands them upon English shores and England is plunged into civil war.

Rise of Democracy in England

For the time being, Parliament is stunned, and the leaders seem paralyzed. But one man is equal to the emergency. This farmer, in rural England, assembles the gentlemen who live in his neighbourhood. They crowd under the trees in his orchard, he reads a psalm, kneels down and prays with them, then tells them that on the morrow a representative of the King is to be in Cambridge to call for troops. Cromwell announces that tomorrow he proposes to hang the King's representative at the crossroads, and to seize the gold plate of the university to hire troops. "I want no tapsters, or gamesters or cowards, but only gentlemen who fear God and keep His commandments." A few weeks later, Prince Rupert and Charles meet Lord Essex and the Parliamentary forces at Marston Moor, and at first are overwhelmingly successful. When the Puritans are defeated, Lord Essex orders Cromwell to bring up his regiment, and the stroke of Cromwell's Ironsides is the stroke of an earthquake. The farmer turns defeat into victory. —

Then comes the overthrow of Charles at Naseby, and "God's crowning mercy" at Worcester. When Scotland tries to force the Presbytery upon England, Cromwell leads his troops north to Edinburgh. When the Irish

Oliver Cromwell

rise up at Drogheda, he marches into Ireland. When Charles breaks all his pledges, and his private correspondence is discovered, exhibiting him in the light of traitor to the liberties of England, Oliver Cromwell becomes executioner, for he has to decide between the head of the King, or the neck of the Parliament. Offered the throne, with the right of descent passing over to his son, he refuses the crown, for he wishes to be the protector, to guard the precious seeds of liberty until such time as a worthy successor for the throne shall appear. If for a time he rules as military dictator, it grows out of the necessities of the times, for Parliament is weak, divided into hostile camps, refusing to correct the laws, investigate the abuses of judges, revise the principles of taxation, do anything for the navy, lighten the burdens of the common people. Divided into little cliques, Parliament wastes weeks and months, and at last Oliver Cromwell enters the House of Commons and dissolves Parliament, charging them with having thrown away a great opportunity. "May God choose between you and me!" exclaims the one man who understands the emergency. He is the true king who can do the thing that needs to be done!

What were the qualities that made Crom-

Rise of Democracy in England

well the great hero that he was? Lord Morley tells us that Cromwell was first of all a practical man, tactful, straightforward, and going straight to his object. With the instincts of the true general, for soldiers he selected sturdy farmers, country gentlemen, men of iron nerve, who did not drink nor gamble, but with whom war meant business. He gave to each of his soldiers a pocket-Bible, and when he hurled his regiments against the jaunty and dapper youths who made up the army of Prince Rupert, his troops swept through the royalist army "as a cannon ball goes through a heap of egg-shells." "Pray, but keep your powder dry," was his motto. He had also the genius of hard work, and the love of detail. He could toil terribly. Nothing escaped his vigilance.

One day he was asked whether he knew that Charles II, then living in Paris, had a representative in England? "Certainly," he replied. "He has one representative who sleeps in such a house, and another who sleeps near the palace. The correspondence of the first is in a trunk under his bed. The letters of the second are in a certain inn."

When he came at length to live in a palace, Oliver Cromwell was simple in his tastes, pure in his morals, tireless in his pursuit of duty.

Oliver Cromwell

It is said that he was a Philistine, and the enemy of culture. But he loved music and encouraged the opera. He loved literature, and his warmest friend was John Milton, the greatest poet and author of the age. If he levelled the castles of England to the ground, that feudalism might have no stronghold to which it could flee, it cannot be said that he hated art, for Cromwell bought the cartoons of Raphael for England, and preserved the art treasures of Charles the First. It stirs our sense of wonder that men should think that Cromwell represents opposition to culture, and that Charles the Second stands for the refinements of life. Charles the Second, the royalist, was a king who endeavoured to sell the cartoons of Raphael that Cromwell had preserved, to the King of France, to obtain money for his court. He encouraged bull-baiting and cock-fighting and pleasures steeped in animalism and vulgarity. No one claims that Cromwell himself was a piece of granite, unhewn and unpolished. The fact is, neither the Puritan nor the royalist stood for full culture and refinement. But of the two men, a thousand times preferable is the Cromwell who maintained friendship with John Milton, who represented genius united to the noblest character.

Rise of Democracy in England

But great as was Cromwell, the ruler, he was greater still as father, citizen and Christian. Alone, amid conspiracies and plots, the weary Titan staggered on. At last the burden broke his heart. He held the realm in order by his will, gave law to Europe, and defended the weak, crushed the bigot, so that far away in Rome the Pope trembled at his name, and the sons of the martyrs blessed him. Suddenly he realized that his great work was done. On his death-bed he lay with one hand upon the breast of Christ, and the other stretched out toward Washington and Lincoln. For hours he lay, speaking great and noble words. The storm that passed over London that day and uprooted the trees in Hyde Park was the fitting dirge for the passing of this noble soul. "God is good," he murmured. Urged to take a potion and find sleep, he answered: "It is not my design to drink and sleep, but my wish is to make what haste I can to be gone." An hour later he lay calm and speechless. His work was done. He had shattered that citadel of iniquity, the Divine Right of Kings, and secured for the people of England the rights of conscience and religion. When the King returned, he returned to reign in accordance with the people's will. When the Church was restored, it was restored upon

Oliver Cromwell

the basis of the Act of Toleration, and the concession that no church can coerce the conscience of the people. Cromwell had compacted Scotland and England. He had outlined the movement of the reform bill of 1832. He had brought in an epoch when, for the first and only time in Europe, morality and religion were qualifications insisted upon in a court. Much of that which is best in the life and thought of America and England, the republic and the great monarchy alike owe to that stern workman of God, Oliver Cromwell.

V

JOHN MILTON

(1608–1674)

The Scholar in Politics

BY common consent, critics acclaim John Milton the greatest Latin scholar, the foremost man of letters and one of the two first literary artists England has produced. Historians have united to give him a place among the ten great names in English history. Take out of our institutions Milton's plea for the liberty of the printing press, his views on education, and all modern society would be changed. Tennyson called Milton "the God-gifted organ-voice of England, the mighty-mouthed inventor of harmonies; an angel skilled to sing of time and of eternity; a seer who spent his days and nights listening to the sevenfold *Hallelujah Chorus* of Almighty God." Voltaire was not an Englishman, but Voltaire characterized Milton's poems as "the noblest product of the human imagination." Many American statesmen believe that the principles of the Compact signed in the cabin of the *Mayflower* and the final

John Milton

Constitution, are none other than the reproduction in political terms of the dreams of freedom that haunted the soul of John Milton all his life long. But it remained for Wordsworth to pay the supreme tribute to this immortal singer :

“Thy soul was like a star and dwelt apart;
Thou hadst a voice that sounded like the sea;
Pure as the native heavens, majestic, free.
We must be free or die that speak the tongue
That Shakespeare spoke; the faith and morals
hold
Which Milton held.”

Poet, statesman, philosopher, champion and martyr of English literature, John Milton was born at one of the critical moments in the history of mankind. His era, says Macaulay, “was one of the memorable eras—the very crisis of the great conflict between liberty and despotism, reason and prejudice. The battle was fought for no single generation, for no single land. The destinies of the human race were staked on the same cast with the freedom of the English people. Then were first proclaimed those mighty principles which have since worked their way into the depth of the American forests . . . and from one end of Europe to the other have kindled an unquenchable fire in the hearts of the

The Scholar in Politics

oppressed. Of those principles, then struggling for their existence, Milton was the most devoted and eloquent champion."

If it be true, as Macaulay would have us believe, that as civilization advances, poetry necessarily declines, and that in an enlightened and literary society the poet's difficulties are "in proportion to his proficiency" as a scholar, then it may truly be said that few poets have triumphed over greater difficulties than John Milton. He was born at the end of the heroic age in English literature, and he enjoyed all the benefits and advantages that travel and culture could bestow upon him. If, however, as others of us believe, great literature is like a spring of clear water, bubbling out of the soil, and no man can say what mysterious elements give it its crystal purity, then it behooves us to examine somewhat into the nature of Milton's parentage, the character of his environment and the significance of the training he received as a young man.

The great poet was born in London, eight years before the death of Shakespeare. The first sixteen years of his life were the last sixteen of the reign of James I. In Cheapside, within a block of his father's house, stood the old "Mermaid" tavern of Marlow, Ben Jon-

John Milton

son, Dekker and Philip Massinger. His father was a scrivener, who drew deeds, made wills, invested money for his clients, and, in general, fulfilled for many families the tasks that now devolve upon the modern trust company. The father's skill and probity won for him an increasing number of clients, and with money came leisure for study and travel. He was a musician, a man of culture, a composer of considerable note; and he made his home an all-round center for young artists and authors. From the beginning, he recognized the unique genius of his son, and made the development of that genius to be the chief object of his life. He never tired of telling the boy that his first duty was to make the most possible out of himself. He held to those ideals that were outlined in Plato's and Aristotle's books on education. Whatever development could come through music, art, lectures, books, teachers, travel, was given the young poet. Just as misers pursue the accumulation of gold, just as ambitious statesmen pursue office and honour, so this father, by day and by night, toiled upon the education of his son; first teaching the child in his own library; then calling to his aid wise and experienced tutors; then sending the boy to a great London grammar school and thence to Cambridge Uni-

The Scholar in Politics

versity. The boy showed promise from the first. His exercises, "in English or other tongue, prosing or versing, but chiefly the latter," early attracted attention. He studied hard, at school and at home; often studying till twelve at night. He loved books, "and he loved better to be foremost." He was only fifteen years of age when he wrote:

"Let us blaze his name abroad,
For of gods, he is the God,
* * * * * *
Who by wisdom did create
Th' painted heavens so full of state,
* * * * * *
He the golden tressèd sun
Caused all day his course to run,
Th' hornèd moon to hang by night
'Mid her spangled sisters bright;
* * * * * *
For his mercies aye endure,
Ever faithful, ever sure."

Throughout his youth, Milton's enthusiasm for reading and learning burned like a fire, by day and by night. He was one of the few students outside of Italy who could think in Latin, debate in Latin, and write verse in Latin quite as readily as in English. "He was a profound and elegant classical scholar; he had studied all the mysteries of Rabbinical

John Milton

literature; he was intimately acquainted with every language of modern Europe from which either pleasure or information was then to be derived." He fulfilled his own definition of education:—"I call a complete and generous education that which fits a man to perform justly, skillfully and magnanimously all the offices, both private and public, of peace and war." And he believed that culture and character should have an aggressive note. "I take it to be my portion in this life, by labour and intense study, to leave something so written to after time, that they should not willingly let it die." Faithfully did he seek to live up to these high ideals. He sowed no wild oats, cut no bloody gashes in his conscience and memory, dwelt apart from vice and sensualism, and, at last, left the university with the approbation of the good and with no stain upon his soul.

Upon entering Cambridge it had been his intention to become a clergyman, but that intention he soon abandoned. The reasons he gives us are "the tyranny that had invaded the church," and the fact that, finding he could not honestly subscribe to the oaths and obligations required, he "thought it better to preserve a blameless silence before the sacred office of speaking, begun with servitude and

The Scholar in Politics

forswearing." His father, meantime, had retired from business, and taken a country house in a small village near Windsor, about twenty miles from London. Few fathers have ever been as generous in meeting and encouraging a son's desire to devote himself to literature. For the next five years and eight months, in that country quietude, within sight of the towers of Windsor, Milton describes himself as "wholly intent, through a period of absolute leisure, on a steady perusal of the Greek and Latin writers." His father, of course, had provided the funds. His biographer Masson says: "Not until Milton was thirty-two years of age, if even then, did he earn a penny for himself." Such a life would have ruined ninety-nine out of every hundred talented young men; but it is the genius of Milton that he put those years to good use. Believing himself to be one dedicated to a high purpose, he not only completed his studies in classical literature but produced, at the same time, those early immortal classics known as his "minor" poems. There he wrote the "Lycidas," one of the world's great elegies; there the "Comus," which alone of all the masques of that time and preceding time, "has gone in its entirety into the body of living English literature." And there he wrote

John Milton

those two exquisite, airy fancies known to every schoolboy under the titles of "L'Allegro," and "Il Penseroso."

It was in 1638, at the age of thirty, that Milton determined to broaden his views by study in foreign lands. Once more his father generously made possible the fulfillment of his ambition. The young scholar naturally turned his steps toward Italy, then the home of painting, letters and the newer learning. His biographer pictures him for us—"a slight, patrician figure, distinguished alike in mind and physique. . . . He carries letters from Sir Henry Wotton; he sees the great Hugo Grotius at Paris; sees the sunny country of olives in Provence; sees the superb front of Genoa piling up from the blue waters of the Mediterranean; sees Galileo at Florence—the old philosopher too blind to study the face of the studious young Englishman that has come so far to greet him. He sees, too, what is best and bravest at Rome; among the rest St. Peter's, just then brought to completion, and in the first freshness of its great tufa masonry. He is fêted by studious young Italians; has the freedom of the Accademia della Crusca; blazes out in love-sonnets to some dark-eyed signorina of Bologna; returns by Venice and by Geneva where he hobnobs with the Diodati,

The Scholar in Politics

friends of his old school-fellow, Charles Diodati." In Rome again, we find him writing Latin poems, some of which, seen by learned Italians, stir these writers to amazement at the thought that a Briton could be so excellent a Latin poet. It was their praise, Milton says in one of his letters, that led to his renewed resolve to devote his life to literature. Then and there he determined to do for England what Homer had done for Greece, what Virgil had done for Rome, what Dante had done for Italy. Lingerin in the Sistine Chapel and in the various galleries of the Vatican, he saw the religious dramas of Michael Angelo, and the paintings of Raphael, with the story of the temptation of Adam and Eve, culminating in the Last Judgment. And in those hours of leisure and contemplation he stored his memory with the glorious images that he was to use in later years for unfolding and unveiling the fall of man's soul in his *Paradise Lost* and *Paradise Regained*.

It was while he was in the midst of his studies in the libraries of Rome and Florence, that the news reached him of the civil war threatening at home. Charles the First had reaffirmed the doctrine of the divine right of kings—that iniquitous theory which long afterward was to be revived by Kaiser Wil-

John Milton

helm as an excuse for the Great War. Over against Charles stood the Parliament, representing the people, and led by John Eliot and John Pym, John Hampden and Oliver Cromwell. Milton, with instant decision, turned his steps toward England. "I thought it dishonourable," he tells us, "that I should be travelling at ease for amusement when my fellow-countrymen at home were fighting for liberty." Back in London, he found the country rocking on a red wave—the Scotch marching over the border—the Long Parliament portending—Strafford and Laud on the verge of impeachment—city pitted against city; brother against brother. His own father, drawing near to the end of his life, was a strong Royalist. The storm had broken, and in that sea of trouble the King and the old leaders were to go down. It is the glory of Milton that in that hour he chose to ally himself with a great cause and abandoning, for the time, his dream of an immortal epic, threw himself into the struggle for intellectual and moral liberty.

For the next twenty years, he was engulfed in a maelstrom of politics, tossed on a feverish tide of political hatred. With his own father and brother on the side of the King, he could no longer live under their roof; and unwilling

The Scholar in Politics

to surrender his convictions of freedom and self-government, he struck out for himself in London. He took lodgings, and for years earned a slender livelihood by preparing pupils for the university. He gave his mornings to his students, and spent his evenings in writing pleas, attacking the autocracy of the King, and supporting the Puritan Leaders who wished to found the new commonwealth. It was not only Milton's life that was so affected. The lives of almost all his English contemporaries suffered similarly. Through the twenty years, from 1640 to 1660, there was an eclipse of pure literature in England. When he wrote he wrote necessarily, in prose. "I have the use," he explains, "as I may account it, of my *left hand*." But never once did he lose sight of his ideal—poetry. "Neither do I think it shame," he explains in one of his pamphlets, "to covenant with any knowing reader, that for some few years yet I may go on trust with him toward the payment of what I am now indebted,"—meaning the composition of some poem which "the world would not willingly let die." He kept his promise—in the fullness of time. But in the interval, he played his part in the great drama of the Civil War.

At the very outset he was forced to endure

John Milton

and triumph over a personal misfortune. Like Shakespeare and Goethe, and many other poets, John Milton was most unfortunate in his marital life. At thirty-five, after a month's rest in the country, he returned to London, bringing with him a wife. She was young and of a family virtually committed to the Royalist cause; she had a shallow mind, and no sympathy either for Milton's artistic aims or his political convictions. The Civil War was on, Milton was giving himself with intense application to important public topics, was away from home in consultation with public men the long day through, and often returned late at night. The poor girl was in despair. A stranger in a great city, with no gift for friendship, she slowly became conscious of the fact that she never could be interested in John Milton's life. Urging the necessity of a brief visit to her country home, she went away and later positively refused to return. Milton was first hurt, then angered and finally disillusioned; and after great mental distress and careful study of the whole question of marriage and divorce, he published his views, which have exerted a profound and lasting influence upon society.

John Milton held that divorce should be as easy as marriage, and that when two people,

The Scholar in Politics

beginning their contract in good faith, discover after honest endeavour, that there can be no happiness in the home, and both decide that it is best and honourable to separate, then there should be no legal obstacle to prevent this, providing always that proper provision be made for the support and education of children, whose character and disposition could not fail to be injured by the daily spectacle of unhappiness. Years afterward, when his wife's family had been rendered homeless, he took them all back into his own house. When his wife died, he married again, and within a year he was left a widower. Six years later he married his third wife, but his home was embittered by endless warfare between his daughters and his third wife. One of his letters says plainly that his wife was kind to him in his blind, old age when his daughters were undutiful and inhuman.

The Civil War was scarcely begun before he issued the first of those thunderbolts of indignation and exhortation known as his pamphlets on church discipline, education, and the liberty of unlicensed printing. The years that followed were years of incessant labour. He began and completed during this period his *History of England*, written from the viewpoint of the common people and tracing the

John Milton

ills, the poverty, and rebellion of Britain to misgovernment and tyranny. When Parliament tried the King upon charges of treason, and executed Charles, it was John Milton who came forward to defend Parliament, in a treatise which bore this title upon the title page:

The Tenure of Kings and Magistrate
Proving that it is Lawful
To call to account a tyrant or wicked King
And, after due conviction, to depose
and put him to death.

By

JOHN MILTON.

Milton was not only the greatest pamphleteer of his generation—"head and shoulders above the rest"—but there is no life of that time, not even Cromwell's, in which the history of the revolution, so far as the deep underlying ideas were concerned, may be better studied. He was the first Englishman of note outside of Parliament to attach himself thus openly to the new Commonwealth. And every one of his prose works had this great quality, that it struck a blow for liberty.

In beginning any study of Milton it must be remembered that his intellect was essentially athletic. If he was the great poet of his era, he was not a dreamer of the closet, but a

The Scholar in Politics

man who plunged into the thick of the fight, and made his writing and his doing a vital and indestructible part of his time. In analyzing the scholar's influence, De Quincey speaks of "the literature of knowledge" and "the literature of power." The function of the first is to teach men, the function of the second is to move and persuade men to action. De Quincey wishes us to understand that Milton's writings entered almost immediately into the thinking and the doing of the British people, just as bread enters into the blood of the physical system. Milton cared nothing for learning for its own sake. Knowledge was important only to the degree in which it was vitally creative, inspiring men, correcting their blunders, rebuking their selfishness, enlightening their darkness, and lifting them into the realm of silence, peace, and mystery. After defining the true scholar and Christian, as a knight going forth to war against every form of ignorance and tyranny, he exclaims, "I cannot praise a fugitive and cloistered virtue unexercised and unbreathed, that never sallies out and sees her adversary, but slinks out of the race, where that immortal garland is to be run for, not without dust and heat." Learning, with Milton, was a means of enlarging his being and doing. Mark Pattison

John Milton

has well said, "He cultivated not letters, but himself, and sought to enter into possession of his own mental kingdom. Not that he might reign there, but that he might royally use its resources in building up a work which should bring honour to his country and his native tongue."

The glory of the battle which he fought for freedom—the freedom of the human mind—is all his own. "Thousands and tens of thousands among his contemporaries raised their voices against ship-money and the Star Chamber; but there were few indeed who discerned the more fearful evils of moral and intellectual slavery, and the benefits which would result from the liberty of the press and the unfettered exercise of private judgment." Milton was determined that the people should think for themselves, as well as tax themselves. And that he might shake the very foundations of the corruptions which he saw debasing the state, he selected for himself the most arduous and dangerous literary service. "At the beginning he wrote with incomparable energy and eloquence against the bishops. But, when his opinion seemed likely to prevail, he passed on to other subjects, and abandoned prelacy to the crowd of writers who now hastened to insult a falling party." He pressed always

The Scholar in Politics

into the forlorn hope. The very men who most disapproved of his opinions were forced to respect the hardihood with which he maintained them.

Milton's prose pamphlets deserve the close study of every writer who wishes to know the full power of the English language. They sparkle with fine passages; they ring with eloquence; they have the fire and the fervour of a great mind at white heat. For quotable sentences, they are "a perfect field of cloth of gold." And the fineness and stiffness of their texture is by no means their greatest splendour. Every one of these controversial pamphlets answers to its author's definition of a good book in that it contains "the precious life-blood of a master spirit."

By far the most popular, and probably the most eloquent of all his prose writings is the famous *Areopagitica*, his argument for the liberty of unlicensed printing. It appeared on the 25th of November 1664, deliberately unlicensed and unregistered, and was a remonstrance addressed to Parliament in the form and style of an oration to be delivered in the assembly. Nobly eulogistic of Parliament in other respects, it denounced their printing ordinance as utterly unworthy of them, and of the new era of English liberties.

John Milton

Admired to-day because its main doctrine has become axiomatic—at one blow it accomplished the repeal of the licensing system and established forever the freedom of the English press—it contains passages which for power and beauty of prose make the finest declamations of Edmund Burke sink into insignificance.

It was not, however, the *Areopagitica*, but his vindication of the execution of Charles the First that procured for Milton the office of Latin Secretary under Cromwell's government. His boundless admiration for Cromwell had shown itself already in his immortal sonnet on the great soldier. He considered Cromwell the greatest and the best man of his generation, or of many generations; and he regarded Cromwell's assumption of the supreme power, as well as his retention of that power with a sovereign title, "as no real suppression of the republic, but as necessary for the preservation of the republic." Cromwell, in turn, saw in Milton a most powerful defender of the new commonwealth. By 1651 it was generally conceded that "the reputation of the Commonwealth abroad had been established by two agencies, and only two:—the victories of Cromwell, and the prose pamphlets of John Milton." In the nature of

The Scholar in Politics

the case, the friendship and mutual respect of the two men was inevitable.

After the death of Charles, new treaties had to be drawn between England and Spain, England and France and Italy and Holland. These state papers were all written in Latin, and the Secretary of Latin and of Foreign Relations was a great person in the cabinet of every country. Milton's knowledge of Spanish, French, Italian, German, Dutch, as well as Latin and Greek, made him an important figure in the deliberations of Cromwell's Council of State. His special duty was the drafting in Latin of letters of state, but from the first, he was employed in every conceivable kind of work. The council looked to him for everything in the nature of literary vigilance in the interests of the struggling Commonwealth. He was employed in personal conferences, in the examination of suspected papers, in interviews with their authors and printers, agents of foreign towns, envoys, ambassadors. It was a period of intense and feverish activity, with cabinet meetings, conferences between the leaders of the government, necessarily held at night. In that era of candle-light and flickering torches, with oil and electricity both still unknown, Milton, with despatches to be translated, notes to be

John Milton

made at all hours, was soon imperilling his eyesight. He was forty years of age when he took the post; at forty-six, as a result of his continuous and indomitable activities, he had ruined his eyes and was totally blind.

Wonderful the fortitude with which he faced this affliction! Hear the lines he composed in the first of those dark days:

When I consider how my light is spent
Ere half my days, in this dark world and
wide,

And that one talent, which is death to hide,
Lodged with me useless, though my soul
more bent

To serve therewith my Maker, and present
My true account, lest he, returning, chide;
'Doth God exact day-labour, light denied?'
I fondly ask: But Patience, to prevent
That murmur, soon replies—'God doth not
heed

Either man's work, or his own gifts; who
best

Bear his mild yoke, they serve him best;
his state

Is kingly; thousands at his bidding speed
And post o'er land and ocean without rest;
They also serve, who only stand and
wait.'

And hard upon this catastrophe came a new turn in the wheel of fortune. Cromwell died; the Commonwealth came to an end; all

The Scholar in Politics

London threw its cap in the air at the Restoration. The leaders of the Commonwealth had to flee for their lives. Some fled to America for safety and some were caught and executed. Cromwell's body was taken from its grave in Westminster Abbey, suspended from the gallows, and left to dangle there. Past Milton's house, near Red Lion Square, the howling mob went by, dragging the body of his old leader. Milton himself, blind and in hiding, narrowly escaped execution. His head was forfeit, his pamphlets burned by public order. Only chance, and the exertion of influential friends, saved him from discovery and death. His escape from the scaffold is a mystery now, as it was a mystery at the time.

In the evil days that followed—the days of the Restoration, with its revenges and reactions, its return to high Episcopacy and suppression of every form of dissent and sectarianism, its new and shameless royal court—Milton, blind and forgotten by the public, turned to his long-cherished dream of a great poem. For twenty years, through all the storm and stress of political agitation, it had never been banished wholly from his thoughts. In the library of Cambridge University there may be seen to-day a list of over one hundred

John Milton

possible subjects, written in his own hand during some leisure-hour when he was pondering the great project of his heart. Living in retirement, visited only by a few close friends, he now proceeded to compose the masterpiece planned as a young man. Unable to see a book, forced to beg every friend who visited him to read aloud to him, dependent upon the assistance of three rebellious daughters, none of whom understood the many languages he knew so well, he nevertheless drove forward, determined to finish his task. *Paradise Lost*, begun and brought to completion in the face of every sort of discouragement, was finished in 1665 and published in 1667.

This amazing poem—the glory of English literature—is one of the few monumental works of the world. The English language possesses no other epic poem, nor a poem of any other kind, which approaches it in sustained sublimity. Nothing in modern epic literature is comparable to it save only the *Divine Comedy* of Dante. It is impossible, in a single page or chapter, to call the roll of the beauties of Milton's poetic style. Much has been written of the organ-music of his verse, its magical, mysterious influence. Speaking generally, the terms mean little; but applied to Milton, both have significance. For his

The Scholar in Politics

melody, his verse-structure, the very names he employs act like an incantation, with an almost occult power.

James Russell Lowell emphasizes this quality: "It is wonderful how, from the most withered and juiceless hint gathered in his reading, his grand images rise like an exhalation; how from the most battered old lamp, caught in that huge drag-net with which he swept the waters of learning, he could conjure up a tall genii to build his palaces." His words, says Macaulay, in another brilliant summary, "are words of enchantment. No sooner are they pronounced, than the past is present and the distant near. New forms of beauty start at once into existence, and all the burial places of the memory give up their dead. Change the structure of the sentence; substitute one synonym for another, and the whole effect is destroyed. There is large learning in the poem—weighty and recondite; but this spoils no music; great cumbrous names catch sonorous vibrations under his modulating touch, and colossal shields and spheres clash together like symbols. The whole burden of his knowledges—Pagan, Christian, or Hebraic, lift up and sink away upon the undulations of his sublime verse, as heavy-laden ships rise and fall upon some

John Milton

great ground swell making in from outer seas.”

Fully to comprehend the peculiar sublimity of *Paradise Lost*, one must understand the peculiar character of the age in which Milton was living. It was a theological era, as the next century was a political era. In their reaction from the absolutism of Rome, the Puritans hated everything that reminded them of the Roman excesses, and that revulsion extended not only to the ecclesiastical autocracy of Rome, but to the lesser things, the clouds of incense, stained glass and the rich dresses of the clergy, the ecclesiastical holidays. These Puritans are called by Macaulay the most remarkable body of men that the world has ever produced. They had a contempt for all terrestrial distinctions. Confident of the favour of God, they despised the dignities of this world. “Unacquainted with the works of philosophers and poets they were deeply read in the oracles of God. If their names were not found in the registers of heralds, they were recorded in the Book of Life. If their steps were not accompanied by a splendid train of menials, legions of ministering angels had charge over them. Their palaces were houses not made with hands; their diadems crowns of glory which shall

The Scholar in Politics

never fade away. On the rich and the eloquent, on nobles and priests they looked down with contempt; for they esteemed themselves rich in a more precious treasure, and eloquent in a more sublime language, nobles by right of an earlier creation and priests by the imposition of a mightier hand. Thus the Puritan was made up of two different men—the one all self-abasement, penitence, gratitude, passion; the other proud, calm, inflexible, sagacious. He prostrated himself in the dust before his Maker; but he set his foot on the neck of his King.”

It is only to be expected that the literature of such an age—both prose and poetry—should be to a large degree theological. Milton's *Paradise Lost* is an epic of war between good and evil. Not that, strictly speaking, Milton belonged to the class just described. He was not a Puritan, any more than he was a Freethinker, or a Royalist. In his character the noblest qualities of all three groups were combined. “From the Parliament and from the Court, from the conventicle and from the Gothic cloister, from the gloomy circles of the Roundheads and the Christmas revels of the Cavalier, his nature selected and drew to itself whatever was great and good.” But the peculiar religious note that is in his great epic,

John Milton

the serious note, the note of dignity, is the distillation of an atmosphere charged and aquiver with the most intense theological convictions.

Numerous accounts have come down to us of Milton's personal appearance and habits toward the end of his life. By nature a patrician, reserved, clothed with a gentle dignity, he was not without a certain haughty, defiant self-assertion such as Lowell ascribes to Dante and Michael Angelo. He came to be a familiar figure in the neighbourhood of his residence, "a slender figure, of middle stature or a little less, generally dressed in a grey cloak or overcoat, and wearing sometimes a small silver-hilted sword, evidently in feeble health, but still looking younger than he was, with his lightish hair, and his fair, rather than aged or pale, complexion."

He was a very early riser, and regular in the distribution of his day, "spending the first part, to his midday dinner, always in his own room, amid his books, with an amanuensis to read for him and write to his dictation. Usually there was singing in the late afternoon, when there was a voice to sing for him; and instrumental music, when his, or a friendly hand touched the old organ." He loved the out-of-door life, walked much in the

The Scholar in Politics

fields, loved his garden and his flowers, made his library to be the world of the open air.

From time to time learned and noble visitors, native and foreign, made their way to his modest home. They read in the lines of his noble countenance the proud and mournful history of his glory and his affliction. They listened to his slightest words, they kneeled to kiss his hand and weep upon it, for the neglect of an age that was unworthy of his talents and his virtues. They contested with his daughters the privilege of reading Homer to him, or of taking down the immortal accents which flowed from his lips. But, for the most part, his last days were days of retirement. The grand loneliness of his latter years makes him the most impressive figure in our literary history. Yet it is idle to talk of the loneliness of one, the habitual companions of whose mind were the Past and Future. "I always seem to see him, leaning in his blindness, one hand on the shoulder of each, sure that the Future will guard the song which the Past had inspired."

Few characters have stood the test of time and history so well. And no other man has so fully incarnated himself in literature. Therefore the tribute of James Russell Lowell: "We say of Shakespeare that he had the

John Milton

power of transforming himself into everything, but of Milton that he had the power of transforming everything into himself.” Dante is individual, rather than self-conscious, and he, the cast-iron man, grows pliable as a field of grain at the breath of Beatrice, and flows away in waves of sunshine. But Milton never let himself go for a moment. As other poets are possessed by their theme, so is he self-possessed, his great theme being John Milton, and his great duty that of interpreter between him and the world. Puritanism has left an abiding mark in politics and religion, but its true monuments are the prose of Bunyan and the verse of Milton. For the epitaph written by his friend was scrupulously accurate: “Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are of good report, Milton thought upon these things.”

VI

JOHN WESLEY

(1703-1791)

*And the Moral Awakening of the Common
People*

NOW that long time has passed, the two bright names of the eighteenth century are seen to be the names of Washington and Wesley. The statement will come with a note of shock to many readers, but beyond most critical estimates, it is one that will stand examination. Time has a way of reversing judgments, and not the least of the changes in men's thought has been the gradual transformation in the attitude of the historian toward Wesley, carried to his grave by six poor men in 1791. Now that one hundred and twenty years have passed, Wesley has thirty millions of followers, who believe in his method and are carrying forward his work. The time has come when there is not a city in Great Britain, or on the North American continent, or in India—and few indeed, of any size in China or Japan—where there are not

John Wesley

some disciples of this teacher, spreading his message, according to his plan. During these hundred and twenty years, dynasties have fallen, empires have perished, cities and states have changed, but the ideas and the influence of Wesley, stamped upon the memories of his followers, have spread like leaven, working often in silence and secrecy, but slowly transforming the world.

The praise of his critics is enough to lend John Wesley enduring fame. Leslie Stephen called him "the greatest captain of men of his century." Macaulay ridiculed the historians of his day who failed to see that "the greatest event of the era was the work of Wesley." To Macaulay's statement that Wesley had a genius for government, equal to that of Richelieu, Matthew Arnold added, "He had a genius for godliness." Buckle called him the first of ecclesiastical statesmen, while Lecky said, "Wesley's sermons were of greater historic importance to England than all the victories by land and sea under Pitt." "No other man," writes Augustine Birrell, "did such a life-work for England. He helped to save England from the horrors of the French Revolution." This is not a careless pronouncement, nor an instance of biographical exaggeration. Born in 1703, be-

Moral Awakening of the Common People

longing to the era just preceding the French Revolution, John Wesley, with his fifty years among the working people of Great Britain, changed the thinking of his time. The eighteenth century was a coarse age; Carlyle summarized it in a single biting phrase: "soul extinct; stomach well alive." The pictures of Hogarth, the journals of Wesley, and the *History of Great Criminals* prove that there was at least a basis for Carlyle's bitterness. Dr. Johnson, in his *Dictionary*, defines a pension as "pay given to a street hireling for treason to his country." Burke describes the British Secretary of State as "the greatest drunkard and most unlucky gambler of his age." Walpole portrays cabinet ministers and statesmen reeling into the ferry-boat of Charon at forty-five, worn out with drunkenness and gout. In his pictures of Beer Street and Gin Lane, Hogarth sketches the drunkenness and filth of the London that he calls "the city of gallows," with a street that was a lane of gibbets, where the corpses of felons hung. Hume and Walpole both prophesied an inevitable revolution, with corpses that would be piled up as barricades "in front of human beasts who fought with the ferocity of tigers." But at the very moment when France was seething with revolt, across in

John Wesley

England, in Newcastle and Moorfields, thousands of grimy miners were assembled, now weeping in penitence, now singing hymns of praise to God. When the spirit of destruction swept over Europe, Wesley's revival had done its work, and its influence held the people of England back from the horrors of the guillotine in Paris. It is for this reason that historians rank John Wesley in terms of abiding influence, above Pitt, Wellington and Nelson.

In *Adam Bede*, George Eliot, the great novelist, describes with the minuteness of an eye-witness an open-air revival meeting among the early Methodists of England. Her heroine, Dinah Morris, relates the incident in the following words: "It was on just such a sort of evening as this, when I was a little girl, and my aunt took me to hear a good man preach out-of-doors, just as we are here. I remember his face well; he was a very old man, and had very long, white hair, his voice was very soft and beautiful, not like any voice I had ever heard before. I was a little girl, and scarcely knew anything, and this old man seemed to me such a different sort of man from anybody I had ever seen before, that I thought that he had perhaps come down from the skies to preach to us, and I said, 'Aunt,

Moral Awakening of the Common People

will he go back into the sky to-night, like the picture in the Bible?" " . . . That man of God was John Wesley, who had spent a lifetime going up and down the land, doing good. He had preached from fifteen to twenty times a week for fifty years—in all, over forty thousand times. In this, his sixty-second year, he was to preach eight hundred times. He had ridden nearly two hundred and fifty thousand miles; and in his long preaching tours through Ireland he had crossed the Channel forty times. The poor had lost their heart to him. The ignorant, the outcast, the collier and clerk alike, all pressed and thronged about this saintly figure, with his beautiful face, his clear eyes, his musical voice, who never tired of telling people, "God is love; Christ is love; and religion is life, as it is the happiest, so it is the cheerfulest thing in the world."

It is written of Moses that his hands were held up by two friends, Aaron and Hur. Not otherwise John Wesley was supported on either side by two great comrades,—Whitefield, the evangelist, and his own brother, Charles Wesley. If any man ever had the gift of eloquence and oratory, it was George Whitefield. At twenty-one years of age Whitefield received orders, and within a single

John Wesley

year he was England's first preacher in point of hearers. His warmest friends may have overpraised this evangelist, but his harshest critics concede that he had the most musical, carrying voice that ever issued from a speaker's throat. During his career he wrote some sixty sermons, but he preached them over and over again, eighteen thousand times. Within a single week he spoke on an average of forty hours. There is nothing in his sermons, as they have come down to us, to explain their marvellous transforming influence, but Whitefield had the vision of the seer, saw heaven and hell as clearly as he saw the world around him, and could make men see and feel what he himself experienced. Benjamin Franklin heard Whitefield preach in Philadelphia, and was carried away by the personality of the preacher, whose luminous eyes, matchless voice, and transfigured face stirred the men of the Quaker City as if he were the angel Gabriel.

Charles Wesley, like George Whitefield, was an evangelist who preached constantly in the open air, to multitudes of fifteen to twenty thousand people. He was without the iron strength of Whitefield, but for fifteen years he did preach once a day, and sometimes two and three times. He lacked Whitefield's organ

Moral Awakening of the Common People

voice, and the strange mystic, magical charm of his brother John, but his sentences were short, with the swiftness of bullets, and he was a most persuasive orator. The fact was, Charles Wesley's emotions were often beyond his powers of control. He pled with men with tears running down his cheeks; his voice shook and quavered; he melted men until their hearts were like water. Often, in the midst of his sermon, he broke into song. In theory he was a high-churchman, but in practice he was a nonconformist, who ordained laymen to the ministry. He was a little man, short-sighted, quick to resent a wrong, loyal in friendship, most lovable, full of faults, and full of sorrow by reason of his faults, an inspired singer of hymns; but he lacked the order, the organizing gift, the iron purpose and the unyielding will of his brother John.

Far greater than either Whitefield or Charles Wesley was the brother, preacher, statesman, theologian, scholar, and evangelist. John Wesley outlived Whitefield by thirty, and his brother Charles, by four years. If Whitefield preached eighteen thousand times, this amazing man preached forty-two thousand, four hundred times and within fifty-one years. His comrades broke down, his friends passed away, bitter opposition de-

John Wesley

veloped, the doors of the churches were closed against him but Wesley's zeal "burned long, burned undimmed, burned when even the fire of life turned to ashes." For fifty years he not only preached, but published seven volumes a year. He did an enormous work as author and publisher. In the interests of the poor he was the first man to publish cheap literature, and he brought many wise books within the reach of colliers and peasants. He wrote a volume on household medicine; simple books on grammar, style, good health and history. He translated the writings of other authors, and abridged works that were beyond the poor man's purse. The germ of the modern lecture system, social settlement work, night-schools, and the shelter-houses of General Booth, are all in Wesley's work. He accomplished an incredible amount as author, publisher, educator, and organizer of social and political reforms. His *Journal*, covering a period of fifty-four years, and existing to-day in the shape of twenty-one beautifully written volumes, has been called "the most amazing record of human exertion ever penned."

This personal *Journal* of John Wesley deserves a place among the few great journals of the world. There are only two other

Moral Awakening of the Common People

eighteen century volumes worthy to be spoken of in the same breath:—Walpole's *Letters* and Boswell's *Johnson*. Horace Walpole was the rich idler, the male butterfly, who lived for pleasure and position, and in his gossiping letters embalmed for later generations "all the lords and ladies, the rakes and flirts, the fools and spendthrifts, the gossip and scandal of a rich man's career." Dr. Johnson stands for manliness, independence, courage, robust common sense. His chief interests in life were literature and politics, and Boswell says that he divided society into two classes, Whigs who were to be cudgelled and scourged, and Tories who were to be admired and praised. But Wesley's *Journal* is upon a far higher level. His spirit is not that of curiosity, as was Walpole's, nor of vehement resentment and personal preferences, as was Johnson's. It is that of a passionate and divine pity. He possessed an overpowering sense of the value of men apart from their position, their politics, their knowledge or ignorance, their poverty or wealth; he saw them as God sees them. And the result is a work far sweeter and finer than either of the two famous volumes just considered.

Wonderful the picture of serenity and strength given us in these intimate, vivid

John Wesley

pages. The story of a single day is the story of the whole fifty years. Wesley rose at four o'clock, read his devotional books until five, preached in the open air to the colliers who had to go to their tasks at half-past six. After breakfast at seven, he mounted his horse; drew rein for a few minutes from time to time to read a page in some book that he was analyzing; after twenty or thirty miles' ride, preached in a public square or some churchyard at noon; dismissed his hearers at one o'clock that they might return to their work; rode rapidly, often twenty miles, to his next appointment, where he preached at five; after supper, when the evening twilight fell, preached again, holding a service that often lasted until nine or even ten o'clock.

During the half century, Wesley worked along the lines of a triangle, westward from London to Bristol, north by Liverpool and Carlisle to Newcastle; then back to London through the towns of the east coast of England. His preaching tours followed the lines of England's industrial centers. He worked where the population was thickest. He loved the mining districts, where two or three thousand men would assemble for him at almost any hour of the day. The falling

Moral Awakening of the Common People

rain never disturbed him, the rough roads seemed to bring no tire. He loved crowds, and noise and excitement did not seem to wear upon his strength. Apparently there was not a tired or sore nerve in his wonderful little body. An entry in his journal speaks of having travelled that day ninety miles, and not being in the least tired, although he seems to have preached three times. "Many a rough journey have I had before," says the *Journal*, "but one like this I never had, between wind and rain, ice and snow, and driving sleet and piercing cold. But it is past; those days will return no more, and are therefore as though they had never been." His appointments were often made a fortnight in advance. His journals are filled with pictures of deep snow, dripping skies, bitter north-west winds.

What is the secret of Wesley's greatness, and how did he ever endure such labour? The hidings of his power are in his wonderful ancestry. Long after Samuel Wesley's death, the son found in the garret of the old rectory a manuscript of his father's, with a scheme of world-wide evangelization which became a chart for the son, who said, "the world is my parish." The mother, Susannah, was possessed of so many gifts that her son felt that to have

John Wesley

fallen heir to her mental and moral treasures was, in itself, a gift of God. Gibbon described his tutor in Oxford as a "man who remembered that he had a salary to receive and forgot that he had a duty to perform."

John Wesley had the opposite theory of life. At seventeen, going to Oxford he won distinction as a scholar of the finest classical taste, of the most liberal and manly sentiments, and one of the finest men of his time. Elected a Fellow of Lincoln College when thirty-two years of age, appointed lecturer in Greek, carrying on his own studies in Arabic and Hebrew, in poetry and oratory, young Wesley wrote in his *Journal* a sentence that describes the next sixty years of his life: "Leisure and I have taken leave of each other." It was true of him in middle life, and it was to be true of him to the day of his death.

During the critical years when Wesley was educating himself, his favourite books were the *Imitation of Christ*, by Thomas à Kempis, Jeremy Taylor's *Purity of Intention*, and William Law's masterpiece, *Serious Call*. It was while he was in Oxford that he formed the habit of reading for one hour before he outlined the duties of the day. Then came the two years' visit to the United States, his

Moral Awakening of the Common People

brief ministry in Georgia, his friendship with the Moravians, and that golden hour on May 24, 1738, when he went with Peter Böehler and passed through an experience like that of Paul on the road to Damascus, that has been described by the critical historian Lecky,—“It is scarcely an exaggeration to say that the scene which took place at that humble meeting in Aldersgate Street forms an epoch in English history.” But it is a striking fact that Wesley’s real work did not begin until he had reached full middle life. It was under the influence of George Whitefield, the greatest pulpit orator England has produced, that Wesley went to Bristol and under pressure by Whitefield, consented to speak in the open air to some three thousand people, gathered about a little eminence. Few careers offer greater encouragement and inspiration to the man who at middle-age has yet to find himself.

And what was the secret of his incredible strength? The secret is very simple. During each day he kept two or three little islands of silence and solitude for himself, betwixt the sermons and crowds. He learned how to read books on horseback. He never hurried, and never worried. He preached with physical restraint, so that public speech became a

John Wesley

form of physical exercise, a life-giving kind of gymnastics. He learned how to breathe, so that speaking three, or four and five hours a day did not injure his vocal cords. Morley, in his *Life of Gladstone*, says that at Gravesend, Gladstone spoke for two hours to an audience of twenty thousand, and his biographer declares that physically and intellectually, that speech was the greatest of Mr. Gladstone's career. Gladstone was sixty-two years old when he performed that feat, which is unique in his career. Wesley's journal is filled with records like this:—

Sunday, August 10, 1786. Preached in the churchyard to large congregations.

Preached at one P. M. to twenty thousand.

At five o'clock to another such congregation.

All at the utmost stretch of my voice.

But my strength was as my day.

Seven years later, August 23, 1773, his journal holds this record:

Preached at Gwennap Pit to above 32,000, perhaps the first time that a man of seventy had been heard by 30,000 persons.

Fitchett says that Wesley's voice must have far outranged Gladstone's. The people all stood closely packed together. At Bristol,

Moral Awakening of the Common People

after the audience had gone, one man measured the ground from Wesley's stand to the outskirts of the audience and found it to be 420 feet. For this reason his biographers say that Wesley preached more sermons, rode more miles, worked more hours, printed more books, and influenced more lives than any Englishman of his age, or *any* age. In 1773 he writes, "I am seventy-three years old, and far abler to preach than I was at twenty-three." Ten years later, the old man writes, "I have entered into the eighty-third year of my age. I am never tired, either with preaching, writing or travelling." And yet his emotions had tremendous intensity. He held thousands of miners in breathless silence for an hour and a half at a time. When he was ill, he exclaimed that if he could only go into the pulpit for two hours, and have a good sweat he thought he might recover. His secret of health was "a little more work." That was the tonic that cured worry and dissipated all clouds.

The moral courage of John Wesley is one of the wonderful spectacles of history. He lived in a brutal, cruel century. The crowds did not stop with jeers, oaths, vulgar epithets. It was a time when disputes were marked by all the savagery of a Spanish bull-fight.

John Wesley

Wesley gives the details of these persecutions and without complaint. The period between June 1743, and February 1744, was particularly trying. An organized movement was carried on to intimidate the people from following Wesley. In several cities the Methodists were beaten and plundered by a rabble that broke into their houses, destroyed their victuals and goods, threatened their lives, and abused their women. During that winter Wesley received many blows, occasionally lost part of his clothing and was often covered with dirt. Meanwhile, enemies went on in advance to sow the towns with wild scandals, and stir up strife and storm, but Wesley went on building churches, developing schools, training lay preachers, organizing his people to take care of the class during his absence.

Wesley was a scholar, and prepared his sermons with the greatest care. He was also a flaming evangelist, and therefore was freed from what Robertson of Brighton describes as "the treadmill necessity of being always ready twice a week with earnest thoughts on solemn themes." Like Beecher, Wesley was not afraid of repeating his sermons. Like Wendell Phillips, he thought a lecturer was never in shape until he had one hundred nights of delivery back of him. Having heard a good

Moral Awakening of the Common People

man say, "Once in seven years I burn all my sermons," Wesley answered, "I cannot write a better sermon on the Good Steward than I did seven years ago; I cannot write a better on the Great Assize than I did twenty years ago; I cannot write a better on the use of money than I did thirty years ago."

As an orator, Wesley had many wonderful gifts. Not a large man, he was compact and strong, with nerves of silk and sinews of steel. In moments of impassioned speech he seemed to tower and take on the dimensions of a giant. His portraits show him to have been a man of fine figure, and beautiful face, with firm lips, mobile and sensitive, eyes bright and kindly. His complexion was very beautiful, fair, clear and somewhat ruddy. His forehead was broad, and beautifully curved. His voice was called the finest instrument of its kind in England, always saving that of Whitefield. During his college days he made a reputation as an accurate scholar, and a keen and skillful logician. All his life long he retained his analytic method, and was always working upon his sermons. He was a master of keen, arrowy sentences. His sermons abound in short paragraphs. His illustrations are simple, but so perfectly related to his thought, that they become a part of the

John Wesley

argument itself. The chief characteristic of his style is its clearness. He excelled in the searching force of the application, and tested the result of each address by the number of hearers whom he had persuaded to change their lives at a given moment.

Little by little he developed a kingly authority. He carried the atmosphere of gentle supremacy. "How did you know that Theseus was a god?" The answer was: "I recognized Apollo by his speech; Mars by his thunderbolts; Minerva by her wisdom, but I knew that Theseus was a god, because whatsoever he did, whether he sat, or whether he walked or whatsoever he did, he conquered." John Wesley was a natural king, ruling men by the divine right of moral supremacy. One day a mob threatened to tear him in pieces. "I called," Wesley writes, "for a chair. Suddenly the winds were hushed, and all was calm and still; my heart was filled with love; my eyes with tears; my mouth with arguments. The leaders were amazed; they were ashamed; they were melted down; they devoured every word." At the end of the sermon the leader, who held a stone in his hand, with which to strike Wesley, seemed transformed. He turned to his followers and shouted, "If any man dares to lift a hand

Moral Awakening of the Common People

against Mr. Wesley he will have to reckon with me first!" Those who came to curse remained to pray.

Wesley has had scores of biographers, and every one of them seems to have emphasized the happiness and the serene cheerfulness of his daily life. If there ever lived a man who dwelt in constant sunshine, and maintained unbroken tranquillity and peace amidst endless storm and tumult, that man was John Wesley. He cared nothing about a great house, servants, equipage, money. It is said that the profits of his various publications were about \$150,000, but he gave this money away as fast as it came in. He discovered the simple life long before Pastor Wagner. He ate sparingly, cared nothing for rich foods or costly raiment. He loved the temperate zone, far removed alike from luxury and poverty. He never wrote a creed. In welcoming a member into his company he asked two questions, "Is thine heart right? If it be, give me thine hand. Dost thou love and serve God? It is enough. I give thee the right hand of fellowship." In that spirit, when members of other churches came to him he bade them keep their own creed if only "they did love and serve God, and desired to save souls."

John Wesley

And so his work spread into every land. Asbury, the great pioneer, rode his horse to and fro over the Alleghany Mountains, preaching in hundreds of settlements between the Atlantic Coast and the Mississippi River. Simpson, with his unrivalled eloquence, travelled from state to state for forty years, founding churches, charging class leaders, consecrating lay preachers, placing the torch in the hand of some gifted youth, and sending him out to light a thousand other tapers. Taylor made his way across India with its three hundred millions, and in every cannibal island in the South Seas and along the path through the jungles of Africa, went the followers of Wesley. It is a wonderful story. For the man who counted himself the friend of all the churches and the enemy of none "has liberalized, broadened and sweetened every Christian faith."

The year 1741 brought the beginning of Wesley's plan of world evangelization. He saw that the millions of the human race would never be reached by a handful of preachers. He tells us that it was as if a veil had fallen from his eyes, after which he saw clearly that Jesus used lay disciples, both men and women, for the spread of His life and teaching. Holding a candle in his hand, Wesley lighted

Moral Awakening of the Common People

another candle, and watched the flame leap from taper to taper. He organized each group of one hundred converts into a class and pledged them to come together in a meeting, when each disciple was to tell the story of what the living Christ had done for him. He saw that merchants advertised their cotton and their woollen goods; that manufacturers went everywhither telling other men the advantages of the new loom, or locomotive; and instead of having one minister to confess Christ before five hundred dumb hearers, Wesley conceived the idea of dedicating each of the five hundred hearers, not to dumbness but to full speech, and to send them forth, from house to house, and mine to mine, and school to school.

Scientists tell us that the Gulf Stream, made up of individual drops of water, each of which has been warmed by the tropic sun, bathes England and turns a land that is as far north as Labrador into a land of fruit and flowers. And from that hour, if other churches had one minister, to five hundred disciples, Wesley dedicated laymen and laywomen to the task of going forth into all the world to tell the story of the love of God to sinful men.

The movement he started is still advancing in the world. It was Wesley who gave the

John Wesley

impulse to Wilberforce, the emancipator, to Howard, the prison reformer, to Livingstone, the missionary, to the Booths with their work for the submerged classes. Above any other man in modern times he made it plain to the miner, the peasant, and the criminal, that they must achieve eminence through penitence and obedience, love and self-sacrificing service. Having turned multitudes to righteousness, his name now shines like the brightness of the firmament, and will continue to shine like the stars for ever and ever.

John Wesley mastered another secret—he knew how to die gloriously. In his last hours, Moody, the evangelist, turned with smiles to a friend, and whispered, “They were all wrong. There is no valley, and no shadow.” Wesley died with that memorable word upon his lips, “The best of all is, God is with us.” He preached his last sermon on February 23, 1791. His last letter was addressed to Wilberforce, and was a protest against the horrors of slavery. A few weeks before, he had given the first five days of the new year to the task of walking through the streets of London, soliciting alms for the relief of the poor. In those days his appearance in the street was the signal for all passers-by to uncover. Men revered him as a noble saint. He died sing-

Moral Awakening of the Common People

ing, in the spirit of serene happiness and out-breaking joy:

*“I’ll praise my Maker while I’ve breath
And when my voice is lost in death,
Praise shall employ my nobler powers.”*

Great was the power of the soldier, Napoleon; wonderful the genius of his opponent Wellington, the victor; marvellous the influence of Pitt, with his vision of the expansion of England as a world power; but more wonderful, a thousand times, the influence of John Wesley, carried to his grave by six very poor men, but whose work is memorable, whose influence is immortal, and whose spirit is inshrined in the hearts of millions of his grateful followers.

VII

GARIBALDI

(1807-1882)

The Idol of the New Italy

AMONG the builders of the New Italy, history has made a large place for Mazzini, the agitator and author, and for Cavour, the statesman, but the common people have kept the first place in their heart for Garibaldi, the soldier, and hero. Mazzini was the John the Baptist of the movement, who descended upon the political ills and wrongs of his time, carrying a torch in one hand and a sword in the other. Cavour was the statesman of the movement, a most skillful diplomat, who organized political and moral forces against the foul wrongs found in the prisons of Naples and the palaces of Rome. But it was Garibaldi who captured the imagination of the Italian people, who turned mobs into regiments, overthrew the citadels of iniquity, and made possible the realization of the visions of Mazzini and the reforms of Cavour.

Unlike the other great men whose stories

The Idol of the New Italy

fill the pages of this little book, Garibaldi was not a man of universal genius; he wrote no enduring history nor philosophy, he created no body of laws. In terms of intellect his gifts were modest. No pamphlet, no great speech survives his death. He was one of the common people. But he was born with the gift of surrender, and he knew how to dedicate himself to a great cause. Early in his career Garibaldi allied himself with an unpopular movement, in the interests of the poor and the oppressed, and thereby opened the doors of hope to all men of modest gifts, who are ambitious to serve their fellows.

The career of this soldier, Garibaldi, forms one of the most dramatic and fascinating tales in history. It is a story so unique and unexplainable that many Italians speak of the miraculous note in it, the note of mystery. Garibaldi's mother was a remarkable woman, who believed that her son had a call from God to do a great piece of work, and she filled the soul of the child with the firm belief that he could not be killed by any sword or bullet or cannon-ball. This supreme conviction explains, in part, deliverances that his biographers tell us were "miraculous." With words of matchless simplicity, the apostle Paul tells us the number of times he was stoned and

Garibaldi

mobbed, flogged and imprisoned; but the perils of Garibaldi in the wilderness, in the city and the sea were scarcely less dramatic. In his boyhood his father was the captain of a sailing vessel, who owned and commanded his own ship and made the ports between Nice and Constantinople. At fifteen years of age the boy went to sea; learned to build a sailing-vessel, to rig the masts, to sail the boat against opposing winds, and to fight the pirates who were still occasionally found upon the seas. And he was barely twenty when, under the influence of Mazzini, he surrendered his soul to the spirit of Washington and Hamilton and dreamed the dream of a second republic. From that moment, when, heart and soul, he threw himself into the cause of liberty, his life was one long chapter of thrilling adventures and miraculous escapes.

His biography teems with striking incidents. Once, after enlisting on the side of the revolutionists, he was on a small vessel going up the La Plata River. Rounding a bend in the stream, Garibaldi's little boat was attacked by two large vessels, that opened fire, cut down the masts, carried away the sails, and covered the decks with killed and wounded. As captain of the boat, Garibaldi wore his red shirt, and so became the target of the gunners.

The Idol of the New Italy

When several of his men tried to drag him below, he answered, "I can't be killed!" A few minutes later a shot struck his neck and cut a part of the jugular vein. Now, many surgeons say that if the jugular vein be severed it cannot be healed, because it is always throbbing and throbbing with each pulse beat, just as it is said that a shot through the heart is fatal. A little later the boat struck a sandbar, and the battle swept to another part of the river. The physician told Garibaldi that his wound was fatal, and asked what word he wished to send home. Garibaldi answered, "Tell my mother I shall live to be seventy-six."

On another occasion, his place of hiding was surrounded by a company of soldiers, who opened fire upon the house. Garibaldi awakened, flung open the door, took his sword in one hand and his dagger in the other—his ammunition was exhausted—and rushed forth against the enemy. From their ambush these enemies saw his red shirt. They had heard that no bullet could kill him, and armed as they were, they fled in every direction, across fields and into the woods.

At the very outset of his career, Garibaldi's life was threatened by the State and a price put upon his head. Under the influence of

Garibaldi

Mazzini, he had joined a secret society and been made acquainted with the plans for a revolution in Italy. The plot was betrayed by a spy, and in the disguise of a peasant trying to buy sheep, Garibaldi was forced to flee across the line into France. Once on French territory, he abandoned caution and entered a village inn. "I must have something to eat," he told the landlord, "I am starving." His host was suspicious and asked Garibaldi if he was not a fugitive, to which the youth replied with open truthfulness, "Yes, I am an Italian! I fled from soldiers who would have shot or hung me, had they been quick enough." . . . "What have you done?" asked the landlord. Garibaldi answered: "I met Mazzini. He told me about the republic in the United States. He said that the American colonists threw off the yoke of a tyrant and made a constitution for themselves, and asked whether the people of Italy could not break their own fetters. I answered that Italy should become a republic."

After that bold statement, the landlord signalled to one of his men, who put his hand upon Garibaldi's shoulder, saying, "I am an officer of the French government. Under the treaty with Italy I am sworn to arrest all those accused of treason who flee across the

The Idol of the New Italy

frontier.” . . . “Very well,” said Garibaldi. “And now that is settled, give me something to eat!”

When the servant asked Garibaldi whether he had money for his dinner, the youth pulled out his purse. “Since I am going to be either hung or shot, I may as well have one good meal before I die!” He then asked two or three strangers who were in the inn to join him in his last dinner, and extended that invitation until there were fifteen or twenty about the table, singing, telling stories, and relating incidents of adventure. When Garibaldi saw that the time had come for his arrest, since a group of soldiers had appeared at the door, he arose, and looking out upon his new friends, said, “Well, the landlord, who is an officer of the government, has sent for these soldiers to arrest me. It seems I have committed treason. I wanted to have a republic in Italy. So I joined Mazzini’s society.” One by one the inmates of the inn rose. One looked toward the landlord and said, “Is this true? Are you going to imprison and shoot this man? Why, this Garibaldi is a great man, and a good man; I never saw him before to-night, but before you arrest him you will have to arrest me.” Another shouted, “Before you shoot Garibaldi, you

Garibaldi

will have to shoot me!” A moment later, the whole company had joined to form a body-guard around the brave young stranger. They lifted Garibaldi to their shoulders. They dared the officers to arrest him. They carried him out to the stable behind the inn, filled his pockets with copper and silver, and paid the driver to set him twenty miles beyond the frontier. Four of them rode with him as a guard to protect him. . . .

Condemned to death, he escaped to South America, where he plunged at once into the struggle for liberty there. The story of the happiness and prosperity of the people of the United States under a free government had spread all over the Southern continent. Unfortunately there were still many men who believed in autocracy and in the absolutism of an hereditary despot. Garibaldi at once took sides. He fought on the sea. He began as a private sailor, but soon became commander of the fleet. He fought on the land. He began as a private soldier, but he ended as a general. Once he was captured and beaten, within an inch of his life. Once he was taken from a prison and hung by his hands from a beam. During those two hours, he tells us, he suffered the anguish of a hundred deaths.

Then came the dramatic meeting with

The Idol of the New Italy .

Anita. One of his soldiers told Garibaldi about the beauty, bravery and self-sacrifice of a daughter of a certain rich man. Hearing that this girl, Anita, had gone to visit a friend in the village, Garibaldi, with several of his men, rode to the little store. Drawing rein before the door of the shop, he sent one of his men into the store to buy some trifle. In the upper window stood Anita. Garibaldi turned his horse and rode close to the door. Looking up, he met the eyes of Anita, and for a full minute, without saying a word, the two looked each into the soul of the other. Suddenly Garibaldi said, "Señorita! I have never seen you before. I do not know your name, but you belong to me! Sooner or later you will come to me." Anita arose. She leaned out of the window. In a low voice she said, "Shall I come now?" And Garibaldi answered, "I will ride up the street and return within a moment. Be ready at this spot." There was just time for Anita to grasp a cloak and a few articles of clothing. A moment later, down the street on a gallop came Garibaldi, followed by his soldiers. Anita was standing on the stone step. As Garibaldi dashed by, he put out his right arm, swept her against his horse and up to the front of the saddle and dashed

Garibaldi

away for a ten mile gallop to a little church whose frightened priest refused to perform the marriage ceremony without publishing the banns for the next two Sundays. Anita's father was of the other political party and the soldier knew that the consent would never be given. Garibaldi laid two revolvers upon the altar and said quietly, "Father, the service will proceed immediately."

So they were married. Anita was well educated as well as brave and very beautiful. In a fit of anger and hate, her father organized a group of conspirators who were to receive a rich reward for killing Garibaldi. It was Anita who discovered the plot and fired the pistol that led the conspirators to believe that they had been discovered. Later, a drunken mob discovered that she was alone in a little house. The leader of the despot organized a group at midnight, all of them crazed with liquor. They set fire to the house and then rushed in, only to find that Garibaldi had not yet returned home. And when these drunken brigands had beaten Anita down and knocked her into unconsciousness Garibaldi returned unarmed save for his dagger. One by one he took these eight men who were standing about the unconscious girl, and one by one they went down before him.

The Idol of the New Italy

His life in South America, extending over a period of fourteen years, was one long struggle against tyranny and oppression. Fighting first in the revolt against Brazil, then joining the patriots of Uruguay, he formed the Italian Legion, and in the spring of 1846 won the battles of Cerro and Sant'Antonio, assuring the freedom of Uruguay. Refusing all honours and recompense he returned to Italy, having heard of the incipient struggle for liberty at home. He landed at Nice in 1848 and, forming a volunteer army of 3,000, plunged at once into the struggle against the French. His troops were largely students, mere lads, many of them never before under fire, and the troops of the enemy included the legions of France, Austria and Spain. The climax of the struggle came with his wonderful retreat through central Italy toward Venice, pursued by four armies. Only his consummate generalship and the matchless loyalty of his men saved them all from annihilation. During this retreat, Garibaldi was accompanied by his wife, Anita, who had cut off her hair and mounted a horse, and who wore men's clothing to avoid observation. Realizing at length that the struggle was hopeless, Garibaldi issued an order, releasing his soldiers, and bidding them return to their

Garibaldi

homes. And leaving Anita hidden at the house of a friend, he himself took refuge in a cave in the hills, after the fashion of David the Fugitive and Robert Bruce—a hiding-place from which he continued to send forth his military orders.

Among the many wonder tales of this period, many of which are traditional and perhaps untrustworthy, there is one that bears the stamp of reality. One night Garibaldi was asleep in the cave. A faithful soldier was on guard. Suddenly the soldier saw a torch waving in the blackness of the valley below. The torch was spelling a signal, but the guard was ignorant of its significance. He hurried into the cave and wakened his leader. Garibaldi knew the signal—it told of the approaching death of Anita. With instant decision, he started down the mountainside; made his way to the house of a peasant, and, despatching a man in advance, found and mounted a horse for the long ride to the village where Anita lay dying. Ahead of him, the galloping rider warned the countryside, shouting that Garibaldi was coming and commanding every man to go into his house and close the door, that no man might see the face of the fugitive, for whose person a reward had long been offered. The hurrying hero changed

The Idol of the New Italy

horses, and when the day was nearly done, rode into the village to the house where his beloved wife lay dying. In the night, wrestling with the death angel, Garibaldi was defeated, and left desolate. When the morning came, he wrapped Anita's body in the flag of the new republic, and buried her in the corner of the garden. That night he rode back to his handful of fugitives, hidden in a defile of the mountains.

It was about the year 1850 that, once more a fugitive, Garibaldi sailed for America, and coming to New York, settled as a Chandler on Staten Island. He had a brother living in New York, and the brother had never tired of writing letters about the wonderful opportunities in the United States. It was an era of candles. Kerosene oil was but little used, while gas and electricity were unknown. As a cattle drover in the Argentine Republic, Garibaldi had seen the great herds on the ranches, the tanneries filled with hides, the great stores of tallow in the warehouses. He entered into an agreement with a friend in South America to keep him supplied with tallow, and over at St. George he started his little candle factory. Later, he became a trading skipper and in 1854 was able to return to Italy with funds sufficient to purchase the

Garibaldi

tiny island of Caprera, and build the house which thenceforth was to be his home.

Throughout the four years in America and on the sea, he had never once ceased to dream his dream of liberty and a republic to be set up in Italy. In 1851, while he was living here, Louis Kossuth, the Hungarian patriot, had landed in New York and received an ovation. While here, Kossuth had perfected the constitution for the republic he proposed to set up in Hungary, and had announced his plans for the overthrow of the royal family, and the enthronement of a president. Garibaldi kept in touch with every such new movement. He read the daily papers of New York; met the political leaders of the city and everywhere heard discussions as to Washington and Franklin, Hamilton and Webster. The fire burned ever more fiercely in his heart. He wrote a friend saying: "Whenever they are ready, the people of Italy can shake off the old tyranny that has come down from the middle ages, just as a peasant in the forest shakes the fallen leaves from his coat."

And during his trading days, while on a voyage to Hong Kong, he dreamed another dream, of a different kind. Half-way across the ocean, he dreamed that he saw his mother kneeling at the foot of a white cross. He fell

The Idol of the New Italy

upon his knees beside it and heard her say: "Fight only for liberty, my son! Fight only for liberty!" It was his birthday, the fifth of May. Months later, he discovered that on that very night his mother had passed away in the little house in Nice. From that hour he dedicated the remainder of his life to the liberation of his native land.

One day, while he was following the plow on his little island farm near the coast of Sardinia, a messenger brought word that an Austrian regiment had landed on the shore of Sardinia and seized the island for Austria. Once more, Garibaldi plunged into the struggle. For a year he fought at the head of Italian volunteers under Victor Emmanuel, against the Austrians, liberating the Alpine territory as far as the frontier of Tyrol. Then, in retirement at Genoa, came another summons—a letter telling the story of the sufferings of the liberal leaders in Naples. King Francis, the tyrant of Naples, had been arresting by wholesale men suspected of sympathy with free institutions. The despot filled the dungeons, crowded the upper cells, packed the corridors between the rows of cells, until there was not room for men even to lie down upon the floor. Without any warning whatsoever, the soldiers would appear at the

Garibaldi

home of some citizen. Without any hearing, much less a trial, men were sent to the royal prison and jammed into corridors already filled to suffocation with murderers, brigands, thieves, forgers. The under-cells dripped with filth. There was no sanitation. Vermin, rats, every form of vice and uncleanness were there. In the stifling heat some smothered to death.

Gladstone was at this time in Italy. One day he reached Naples, en route for Pompeii and Herculaneum. Calling upon the British Consul, he was told about these prisons, that were death-traps. He hurried back to London. He used his official position as a statesman under Queen Victoria to address a letter to the civilized peoples of the world. A wave of indignation and horror swept over the capitals of Europe. The hour had struck for Italy. Garibaldi headed a tiny army and started south to the attack. Naples was besieged. After weeks of fighting, and oft wounded, one day with clothes covered with blood he addressed a handful of citizens: "Soldiers, what I have to offer you is this—hunger, thirst, cold, heat, no pay, no barracks, no rations, frequent alarms, forced marches, charges at the point of the bayonet. Whoever loves honour and fatherland, follow

The Idol of the New Italy

me!" Ah, Garibaldi knew that there is a latent instinct of heroism in every human heart. Why are there few boys going into the ministry to-day? Because the task has become too easy. Here are the young fisherman, John; the young physician, Luke; the young rabbi, Paul;—offer them stones, scourges, blows, fagot-fires, martyrdom, and they will leap into the breach. After that appeal of Garibaldi four thousand men followed their leader to battle. Soon the bloody tyrant of Naples was driven from his city.

Then came the long campaigns in the south, with Garibaldi's entrance into the city of Palermo; the struggle in Sicily, the siege of the fortress at Massina, the triumphal march through Calabria, his victory at Naples, culminating with that great day, September 7th, 1860, when he handed over a fleet and an army to Victor Emmanuel. Having endured every form of peril, hunger, and cold, with loss of blood through many wounds, the citizens of Naples, after the expulsion of their recreant King, turned with one heart and offered him the throne for his leverage, and the palace for his home. But Garibaldi refused the throne, because he believed in the republic, and no bribe nor blandishment could swerve him a hair's breadth from his convic-

Garibaldi

tion that the fairest, stablest form of government was self-government.

On the day of his entrance, the people went out and carried him into the city upon their shoulders. All along the central street he was welcomed with the words, "Secundo Washington"—"Second Washington." For what Lincoln did for the three million slaves, and what Washington did for the three million colonists, Garibaldi had wrought for three million downtrodden Italian peasants. But having freed the people from cruel oppression, he sent for Victor Emmanuel, the ruler who had insulted him, and said, looking toward his army and the captains of his navy, "I have not been trained for civil government! I therefore abdicate my position as commander-in-chief of the army and navy, and I turn these instruments of defense and offense over to you." History holds the story of no sublimer act of disinterested patriotism. That deed insured a united Italy, the chief aim of Garibaldi's life.

From that hour his fame, his place in the history of Italy were fully established. During the next few years many honours and offices were offered Garibaldi, all of which he consistently declined. He was the last hero of the heroic age of the new Italy, the

The Idol of the New Italy

most popular, the most legendary, in the sense that he resembled a hero of old romance. A faithful soldier, who might have been a king; a hero always a hero, even to his own servants and amid sordid circumstances; unspoiled by the admiration of the world and the adulation of his friends; a warrior with hands unstained by plunder, cruelty or the useless shedding of blood, he remained to the end one of the few characters for whom neither wealth nor rank ever offered temptation. Michelet, the French historian, wrote of him, "There is one hero in all Europe—one! I do not know a second. All his life is a romance; and since he had the greatest reasons for hatred to France, who had stolen his Nice, caused him to be fired upon at Aspromonte, fought against him at Mentana, you guess that it was this man who flew (during the Franco-German War) to immolate himself for France. And how modestly, withal! Nothing mattered it to him that he was placed in obscure posts quite unworthy of him. Grand man, my Garibaldi! My single hero! Always loftier than fortune! How sublimely does his memory rise and swell toward the future!"

In retrospect, strategists tell us that Garibaldi knew little and cared less about the usual military tactics, or the plans of organization

Garibaldi

and transport taught in military schools. His wonderful career, with its many and brilliant victories, is explained by the supreme influence which his person exercised. Knowing neither danger nor fear, rushing into the most perilous spots, his very daring fascinated and inspired his followers. "He had all the instincts of the lion; not merely the headlong courage, but the far nobler qualities of magnanimity, placability, self-denial. His impulses were all generous, his motives invariably upright, his conscience unerring." The most loving among great leaders, the least hating among great soldiers, he was devoid of all personal ambition, as he was devoid of all rancour and malice. He was one of the most picturesque leaders, one of the most dramatic figures in all history. "None could fail to admire or be inspired by the sight of him on the field of battle, as with clear, ringing silver voice, his lion-like face, his plain red shirt and grey trousers, he sat his horse with perfect ease and calm, guiding his soldiers by plunging into the thick of the enemy and trusting his troops to follow."

Garibaldi's moral courage was always the equal of his physical bravery. During the siege of Rome, when he was defending the city against the forces of Austria and of

The Idol of the New Italy

France, the enemy located the house from which he was directing the defense. Cannon-ball, smashing through the roof, carried away his flag; bullets aimed with unerring accuracy entered the windows, and buried themselves in the walls. While the others ran to the cellar, Garibaldi walked out the front door, stood on the steps, and calmly supervised the carrying to a place of safety of all the important military papers. That night the Roman leaders sent messengers to Garibaldi, and insisted upon surrender. At last Garibaldi exclaimed, "Is it not enough that I must fight our enemies? Has it come to this, that with equal strength I must oppose my friends?" And then, he lifted his broken sword, and exclaimed: "On my monument write these words, 'A man who never surrendered to the enemies of human freedom!'"

Where were the hidings of this man's power? History tells of no leader who was so idolized. For Garibaldi men braved martyrdom. For him, women endured starvation. Priests risked the anathema of their masters. Boys, wearing the red shirt, flung themselves upon the bayonets of Austria and France. Captured, they were tortured by the enemy, but died smiling rather than betray Garibaldi. There is a tradition not mentioned by his best

Garibaldi

biographer, that many Italians claim is absolutely true. Once when he was in hiding, he appeared at midnight in the public square of Naples. The city was completely controlled by the King, who had set a price upon Garibaldi's head. But many of the people were secret followers of Garibaldi, who wished to confer with one of his friends in the prison. Recognizing a policeman who was his friend, Garibaldi put his fingers upon his lips and drew his cloak the closer about his face. After a whispered word the soldier led Garibaldi to the entrance of the prison. Another whispered word and the great iron gate swung open. A second whispered conversation and the inner gate opened. Within, another guard stooped while Garibaldi whispered in his ear. A little later, out of a cell, came that captured friend of Garibaldi. The hero asked and obtained the information he desired. Putting his two fingers upon his lips, Garibaldi saluted, and was led to the inner gate. Having passed through he put those two fingers upon his lips, saluted, and was led to the outer gate. Putting his fingers upon his lips he saluted again, and with an officer who had become his guide, walked hurriedly to an alley, where he stepped into his carriage, where he saluted and disappeared in the dark-

The Idol of the New Italy

ness—whether cellar or attic no man knows unto this day. The following morning Garibaldi led his troops into battle. Now tell me, where is there in history of human heroism a chapter more thrilling than this story of Garibaldi?

The truism that men without fault are generally men without force, is well illustrated in the life of Garibaldi. It is the strongest, most adventurous, romantic and troublous career in history. There are many blots upon his scutcheon, just as there are many yellow spots upon the front columns of the Parthenon, and nothing is gained by calling the roll of faults rehearsed by his critics and enemies. "The evil that men do lives after them; the good is oft interred with their bones." Remember the story of the farmer in Sardinia who came home at night, sick because he had lost a favourite lamb, and how the next morning Garibaldi returned with the little dumb creature wrapped in his blanket and lying upon his bosom. Remember, how at Palermo, Garibaldi came out of the battlefield unshaken, but at sight of the little orphans in the asylum crying for food the great soldier burst into tears. Even when they led him to the palace and called him "Your Excellency," he

Garibaldi

frowned and moved to the lighthouse, where, the idol of his people, he lived in a tiny room with no furniture but a couch and a stool. Once he was offered great riches if he would go out to China and lead a regiment and ship slaves to South America, but he answered that "Not all the wealth of the Indies could induce him to buy and sell human flesh." After his long campaigns and victories for the people of Uruguay the new government sent him a title deed to an enormous tract of land and thousands of heads of cattle, but he tore up the deeds because he had fought for liberty. In time of plague he became a nurse, in time of shipwreck he risked his life to save his comrades.

It is true that for some years, under the influence of two friends who were foreigners, he passed under the influence of their own materialism and doubt, and he tells us that from that hour it seemed as if the spirit of his mother and of Anita had both deserted him. During the last years of his life he became almost a hermit and seemed to be confused by the problems of the world in which he lived. But he had been starved, imprisoned, tortured, betrayed and shot down. The real Garibaldi speaks in this message that he addressed to the people of Italy:

The Idol of the New Italy

“I am a Christian and I speak to Christians.

“I love and venerate the religion of Christ.

“Christ came into the world to deliver humanity from slavery.

“You who are here have the duty to educate the people.

“Educate them to be Christians.

“Education gives liberty.

“On a strong and wholesome education for the people depend the liberty and greatness of Italy!

“Viva Victor Emmanuel!

“Viva Italia!

“Viva Christianity!”

VIII

JOHN RUSKIN (1819–1900)

And the Diffusion of the Beautiful

THE genius of John Ruskin's message is in a single sentence: "Life without industry is guilt, and industry without art and education is brutality." He held that all the doing that makes commerce is born of the thinking that makes scholars, and that all the flying of looms and the whirling of spindles begins with the quiet thought of some scholar, hidden in a closet, or sequestered in a cloister. He never made the mistake of supposing that education would change a ten-cent boy into a thousand-dollar-a-year man, but he *did* know that there is some power in Nature that will transform a seed into a sheaf, an acorn into an oak, and that the truth will change a child into a sage, a statesman, a seer, a man with a message for his century.

Ruskin wrote many volumes to prove that wealth is not in raw material;—not in iron, not in wood, not in stone, not in cotton, not in wool. Wealth is largely in the intelligence

Diffusion of the Beautiful

put into the raw material. Pig-iron is worth twenty dollars a ton, but intelligence turns that ton of iron into a ton of tempered hair-springs, and it is worth perhaps ten thousand dollars a ton. The clay in Rodin's *Thinker* represents a value of a few francs, but the idea in the *Thinker* brought 150,000 francs. On the sixtieth anniversary of the coronation of Queen Victoria, an editor offered Rudyard Kipling \$1,000 for a Commemoration poem. The paper, ink and the pen stand for a few pennies; all the rest of the \$1,000 was for a trained intellect. The average income of a family in the United States to-day is not far from \$2,000. That income could be carried up to \$4,000 if our workers would only double the intelligence, efficiency and loyalty put into the raw material they handle!

The career of Edison illustrates the industrial value of one informed intellect to the nation. In 1910, business men in the United States had invested in the expired patents of Thomas Edison six billion seven hundred millions of dollars. These factories brought in an annual income of a billion and seventy millions of dollars. To-day, half-a-dozen Edisons, the one showing us how to burn the coal in the ground, the other taking nitrogen out of the air, another showing us how to trans-

John Ruskin

mute metals, another attacking the enemies of the cotton, the fruits and the grains, with a teacher who would show the parents of the country how successfully to assault intellectual and moral illiteracy, would easily double our annual income. What our country—what every country—needs is an invasion of knowledge and sound sense. Therefore Ruskin's message, "the first business of the nation is the manufacture of souls of a good quality."

During his lifetime John Ruskin wrote some forty volumes. Between the ages of twenty and thirty he wrote *Modern Painters*, dealing with the claims of cloud, sun, shower, wave, shrub and flower, land, sea, and sky upon man's intellectual and moral life. He held that the open-air world is man's best college and the forces of the winter and the summer his best teachers. From thirty to forty he wrote the *Lectures on Architecture*, and *Stones of Venice*, with many studies of the galleries, towers, and cathedrals of Florence and Rome. In these books his thought is that the soul of the people within determines the painting, architecture and civilization of the state without. From forty to fifty he wrote many books on the claim of the beautiful upon man's spiritual life, and insisted that those claims were binding not less upon the work-

Diffusion of the Beautiful

ing people and the peasants in factory and field, than upon the scholar in his library and the artist in his studio.

From fifty to sixty he wrote his *Fors Clavigera*, his *Time and Tide*, *Munera Pulveris*, and *Unto This Last*, studies of the problems of wealth and poverty, of labour and capital. He tells us that men, to-day, are charmed with the glitter of gold and silver as young birds are charmed with the glitter of snakes' eyes; that the business man is divinely called to serve through property; that there is, however, such a thing as a despotism of wealth; that the property of some millionaires represents the breaking of the strength and the will of competitors and the paralysis of the forces of the people, so that what seems to be wealth, in verity is only "the gilded index of far-reaching ruin, a wreckers' handful of coin, gleaned from the beach to which he has beguiled an argosy; the camp follower's bundle of rags, unwrapped from the breasts of goodly soldiers dead, the purchase pieces of potter's fields, wherein shall be buried together the citizen and the stranger."

And then Ruskin bent himself to what he believed to be the real task of his life, the writing of a series of books on the problems of labour and capital, in the hope that he might

John Ruskin

save the State from trampled cornfields and from bloody streets. But just at the supreme moment in his career his health gave way, and he never completed his studies of the *Robber King*, the *Rust Kings*, the *Moth King* and the *Hero Kings*. John Ruskin died believing himself to be an unfulfilled prophecy, in that he was unable to complete these books for which he believed all his life had been one long preparation. But in reality he was a prophet who gave forth a message that is slowly transforming the institutions of mankind.

A full understanding of Ruskin's life-work begins with an outlook upon his contribution to modern social reform. Biographers often identify a great reform with one man's name, as if this man, single handed, had wrought the social transformation. Thus they speak of Howard as the reformer of prisons; of Shaftesbury as the author of the Poor Acts; of Cobden as the author of the Corn Laws; of Lincoln, as the emancipator of slaves; of Booth as the founder of the City Colony, the Home Colony, the Farm Colony. But strictly speaking, thousands of leaders of the movement for the abolition of slavery stood behind the forces of Wilberforce in England, and Lincoln in the United States. Not otherwise

Diffusion of the Beautiful

many biographers have claimed too much for the influence of Ruskin, certainly more than the master would have claimed for himself.

At the beginning of his career Ruskin started a movement to diffuse the beautiful in the life of the people. For centuries the beautiful had been concentrated in the temples of Athens, the palaces and galleries of Italy, the museums of Paris and London, in the manor houses of the landed gentry. Meanwhile the poor people of Athens, Venice and Florence lived in huts, wore leather garments, ate crusts, dwelt amid ugliness, squalor and filth. Ruskin dreamed a dream of the beautiful put into the life of the common people. He found that Sheffield, with its smoking chimneys and grimy streets, had been spoken of as the ugliest factory town in England. Therefore Ruskin went to Sheffield, hired a building, installed therein his paintings, etchings, and illuminated missals, and hired a few instructors to help him diffuse the beautiful in the daily life of the people. He brought in men who made the implements of the dining-room, and showed them how to make the knife, the fork, the spoon, the table linen, minister to the sentiment of taste and refinement. He brought in men who made wall-papers for the poor man's house, and showed the craftsmen

John Ruskin

how to make the colours soft and warm, delicate and beautiful. He interested himself in beautiful furniture. He wrought with William Morris for a more beautiful type of illustrations in books and magazines. He denounced the ugliness of the houses and clothing and bridges and railways. He insisted that women should have beautiful garments, the youth read beautiful books, the men ride in beautiful cars, the families live in beautiful little houses, the children play upon beautiful carpets and look upon walls that had one or two beautiful pictures. John Ruskin laboured, and others wrought with him, and now at last we have entered into the fruit of their labours. To-day the beautiful, once concentrated in temples, palaces, and cathedrals, is diffused in the life of the common people.

In the same fashion Ruskin started a movement among the working men for a diffusion of sound learning. The St. George Guild represents the first University Extension Course and the first Chautauqua system our world ever knew. More than fifty years ago he worked out his plan to carry the knowledge given to rich men's sons in their lecture halls and libraries to the working people, who were to carry on their studies in the evening after the day's labour was over. He laid out a

Diffusion of the Beautiful

course of studies for these working men, planned the organization of lecture centers, gave us the outline of the University Extension Course of lectures, induced many men in England to go from one working man's guild and club to another, and after Ruskin's health broke down, the men in the faculty of Oxford University took Ruskin's mother-idea, and developed it into the University Extension Course of lectures. Brought to our country that idea has spread through these lecture courses carried on in great halls in the winter, in tents and open-air assemblies in the summer.

We say much of our Social Settlement Work, and trace these thousands of settlements in the tenement-house region of great cities back to Arnold Toynbee's work, and that of Canon Barnett, in the East End of London. But we must remember that when Ruskin was lecturing in Oxford to some of the richest boys in Great Britain he told them that every boy who consumed more than he produced was a pauper and that the more the youth received from his ancestors and the State, the larger his debt to those who were less fortunate. He believed that every gifted boy should keep in touch, not only with his own class, but with all classes, and that every

John Ruskin

youth would do well to do some physical work every day. Ruskin and his students built a road outside of Oxford, and the foreman of the gang of students was young Arnold Toynbee. Toynbee admired and loved Ruskin, as a young pupil and disciple loves a noble teacher and a great master.

After his health broke down, Ruskin gave up his work in Whitechapel Road and urged Arnold Toynbee to give himself to the problems of the poor, and when Ruskin's health gave way completely, it was Toynbee who rewrote his lectures on labour and capital and gave them a new form in his *Industrial Revolution in Great Britain*. The time came when Arnold Toynbee broke down with overwork and brain fever, as his master had broken before him, and his friend Canon Barnett raised the money to make Toynbee Hall a permanent institution. But the seed of the Social Settlement movement was John Ruskin's brief career in the tenement region of the East End, and the first full fruit was in his disciple's Toynbee Hall and in Canon Barnett's noble work at St. Jude's. Little by little the Social Settlement Idea spread, until in the tenement regions of Manchester, Birmingham, New York, Boston, Chicago and San Francisco, gifted men and women of wealth, leisure and

Diffusion of the Beautiful

patrician position, began to give their lives to the neglected poor.

Not less striking, the influence of Ruskin upon the plans of General Booth. Long before the book called *In Darkest England and the Way Out* was published, Ruskin founded his coöperative printing press in a little colony outside of London. One of his biographers has told the story of Ruskin's plan to make the men and women in the poorhouses self-supporting, happy and useful. This biographer has never fully established the connection between that first coöperative colony of Ruskin, and Booth's plans for the City Colony, the Farm Colony and the Foreign Colony. But one thing is certain:—Ruskin had a pioneer mind. Instead of his chief interest being in mountains and clouds, in wave and flower, cathedrals, pictures, marbles, illuminated missals, the overmastering enthusiasm of his life was people, and his real message was a message of social reform. When long time has passed, Ruskin's fame will rest upon his work as a social reformer, a man who loved the poor and weak.

Not less significant, his views of education, that have leavened all modern schools whatsoever. Matthew Arnold defined culture as "a familiarity with the best that has ever

John Ruskin

been done in literature.” Ruskin insisted that there were thousands of scholars living in their libraries, surrounded by books, who were perfectly familiar with the best that has ever been thought or done, but whose knowledge was all but worthless, because it was selfish. He looked upon the informed man as a sower, going forth to sow the seed of truth over the wide land. All selfish culture is like salt in a barrel; the salt has no power to save unless it is scattered. Selfish culture is like seed corn in the granary, important for a harvest. Under Ruskin’s influence many of his friends gave an evening or two a week to lectures before his working men’s clubs, his art groups, and his classes for the improvement of the handicrafts.

No modern author has made so much of vision, or tried so hard to teach people how to see. Many teachers think that education is stuffing the pocket of memory with a mass of facts. When the mind is filled so that it cannot hold another truth, the youth receives a diploma. Ruskin held that education was teaching the child how to see everything true and beautiful in land and sea and sky. “For a thousand great speakers, there is only one great thinker; for a thousand great thinkers, there is only one great see-er; we cut out one

Diffusion of the Beautiful

“e” and leave it seer, but the true poet and sage is simply the see-er.” The millions are blind to the signals hanged out from the battlements of cloud. Isaac Newton was a see-er,—he saw an apple falling from the tree; saw a moon falling through space, and gave us the law of gravity. Columbus was a see-er. In a crevice in a bit of driftwood, tossed upon the shore of Spain, he saw a strange pebble, and his imagination leaped from the driftwood to the unknown forest from whence it came, from that bright piece of stone to the mountain range of which it was a part. Columbus had the seeing eye, and discovered the continent hidden behind the clouds.

Not otherwise the geologist sees the handwriting of God upon the rock-pages; the astronomer sees His writing upon the pages of the sky; the physiologist reads His writing on the pages of the human body; the moralist deciphers the writing on the tablets of the mind and the heart. The beginning of Wordsworth’s fame was the hour when his eyes were opened, and he saw man appearing upon the horizon, and like a bright spirit trailing clouds of glory, coming from God who is man’s home. It was the inner sight of Wordsworth’s soul that was “the bliss of solitude.”

John Ruskin

It was his power of vision that enabled him to look out upon the field, yellow as gold, a vision that lingered long in his memory when he said, "and then my heart with rapture thrills, and dances with the daffodils."

It is useless for people who are colour-blind to look at Rembrandt's portrait. It is folly for people who cannot follow a tune to buy a ticket for a symphony concert. Men who by neglect atrophy the spiritual faculty, or by sin cut gashes in the nerve of conscience, will soon exclaim, in the spirit of the fool, "There is no God," just as the blind man is certain that there is no sun. The old black ex-slave, Sojourner Truth, once illustrated this principle. In those days excitement ran high. Northern merchants, fearful of losing their trade with Southern cities, frowned upon any one who dared criticize "the peculiar institution" of the South. One day, in New York, Sojourner Truth, just escaped from slavery, went to an Abolition Meeting, hoping for an opportunity of making a plea for the emancipation of her race. When the black woman, with her gnarled hands, and face seamed with pain and sorrow, arose to speak, a young newspaper reporter slammed his book upon the table, and stamped his way down the aisle toward the door. Just before he reached the

Diffusion of the Beautiful

door, Sojourner Truth stretched out her long black finger and said, "Wait a minute, honey! You goin' 'way 'cause of me? Listen, honey—I would give you some ideas to take home with you to your newspaper, but I see you ain't got nothing to carry 'em in!" . . . Homely but forceful illustration of an old truth. The angel of truth and the angel of beauty, leaning from the battlements of heaven, oft whispers, "Oh, my children! I would fain give you a new tool, a new painting, a new science, but you have no eyes to see the vision, and no ears to hear the sweetest music that ever fell from heaven's battlements." It is the man of vision who founds the new school of painting, or the new reform or the new liberty. The visions of the idealist to-day become the laws and institutions of to-morrow.

In this power of the open eye, Ruskin found the secret of daily happiness, and mental growth. No one knew better than John Ruskin that the millions of working men and women would never be able to make their way to the galleries of Paris and Madrid, of Florence and Venice, to St. Peter's or the Parthenon, much less have time, leisure and money for travel unto the far-off ends of the earth. Therefore he taught the people how to see the wonders of God, in every fluted blade of grass,

John Ruskin

in every bush that blazed with beauty, and blazing, was not consumed. He proved that he who knows how to see will find the common clod to be a casket filled with gems, and that the sky that looks down upon all workers, spreads out scenes of such loveliness and beauty as to make travel to distant lands unnecessary!

And yet, for the most part, men turn their eyes toward the sky only in moments of utter idleness and insipidity. "One says it has been wet, and another, it has been windy, and another, it has been warm. But who, among the whole chattering crowd, can tell me of the forms and precipices of the chain of tall white mountains that girded the horizon at noon yesterday? Who saw the narrow sunbeam that came out of the south, and smote upon their summits, until they melted and mouldered away in a dust of blue rain? Who saw the dance of the dead clouds, when the sunlight left them last night, and the west wind blew them before it like withered leaves? All has passed, unregretted, and unseen. Not in the clash of the hail nor the drift of the whirlwind, are the highest characters developed. God is not in the earthquake, nor in the fire, but in the still small voice. Blunt and low those faculties of our nature, which

Diffusion of the Beautiful

can only be addressed through lamp-black and lightning.”

The whole world owes Ruskin an immeasurable debt for this: that he taught us how to see the beauty in the great imperial palace in which man hath his home.

In his defense of Turner, the world's greatest landscape painter, Ruskin advanced his theory of first seeing accurately, and then, through the creative imagination, carrying up to ideal perfection flowers, faces and landscapes often marred by the storms and upheavals of life. It is altogether probable that John Ruskin saw as accurately the scene of loveliness as Turner himself. It seems quite certain that Ruskin was altogether unique in his capacity for enjoyment. It was not simply that his eyes saw accurately, and his intellect registered his impressions without flaw, but that his imagination and his emotions were sensitive to the last degree, as sensitive as the silken threads of an *Æolian* harp that responds to the lightest wind that blows. Many people know the intense flavour of a strawberry, but Ruskin's soul was pierced with an intense and tumultuous pleasure at the sight of the clouds piled up upon the mountains. He loved Nature with all the passion with which Dante loved Beatrice.

John Ruskin

In Ruskin's forty odd volumes the scholar can find registered a hundred experiences in the presence of the mountain glory and the mountain gloom, in which this delight and happiness sent his whole body shivering with the piercing intensity that shook the soul of Romeo during his passionate interview with Juliet. Coarse natures, gluttonous, avaricious, full of hate, can no more understand the happiness of Ruskin's life than a deaf man can understand Mozart's rapture, when he listened to the music in the cathedral. Not even a tornado can make a crowbar vibrate, but the flutter of a lark's wing can set a silken thread vibrating and singing.

Ruskin has spread out, like a rich map, the story of the people who educated him. The overmastering influence in his life was that of his mother. He tells us that he received from his home in childhood the priceless gift of peace, in that he had never seen a "moment's trouble or disorder in any household matter, or anything whatever done in a hurry or undone in due time." To this gift was added the gift of obedience. "I obeyed word, or lifted finger, of father or mother, simply as a ship her helm; not only without idea of resistance but as necessary to me in every moral action as the law of gravity in

Diffusion of the Beautiful

leaping. To the gifts of peace and obedience my parents added the gift of Faith, in that nothing was ever promised me that was not given; nothing ever threatened me that was not inflicted, and nothing ever told me that was not true." And to these was added the habit of fixed attention with both eyes and mind—this being the main practical faculty of his life, causing Mazzini to say of Ruskin that he had "the most analytic mind in Europe."

The books from which Ruskin had his style in childhood were Walter Scott's novels, Pope's translation of the *Iliad*, Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe*, Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*, and above all, the Bible. "My mother forced me, by steady and daily toil, to learn long chapters of the Bible by heart; as well as to read it every syllable through aloud, hard names and all, from Genesis to the Apocalypse, about once a year; and to that discipline, patient, accurate, and resolute, I owe much of my general power of taking pains, and the best part of my taste in literature." The great chapters of the Bible from which Ruskin says he had his style included the fifteenth and twentieth of Exodus; the twenty-third Psalm, and also the thirty-second, ninetyeth, ninety-first, one hundred and third, one hundred and twelfth, one hundred and nineteenth, one hun-

John Ruskin

dred and thirty-ninth, the Sermon on the Mount, the conversion of Paul, his vision on the road to Damascus, Paul's Ode to Love and Immortality. "These chapters of the Bible," Ruskin says, "were the most precious, and, on the whole, the one essential part of my education."

Ruskin's message upon education is of vital importance to the people of our republic. Strictly speaking, education should teach each citizen to think aright upon every subject of importance, and to live a life that is worthy, making the most out of the gifts received from God and one's ancestors. Ruskin traced the national faults and miseries of England to illiteracy and the lack of education in the art of living. The inevitable result of this illiteracy was that England "despises literature, despises compassion, and concentrates the soul on silver." From this illiteracy came physical ugliness, envy, cowardice, and selfishness, instead of physical beauty, courage and affection. To the dry facts taught, therefore, he proposed to add inspiration, and the art of seeing.

Above all, he feared the results of uniformity and the manufacture of men by machinery, until all youths coming out of the same school, having studied the same facts,

Diffusion of the Beautiful

in the same way, became as uniform as crackers, and also as dry. The important man, he thinks, is the occasional boy, who has received a gift and can open up new realms for the rest. "Genius? You can't manufacture a great man, any more than you can manufacture gold. You find gold, and mint it. You uncover diamonds, but do not produce them. You find genius, but you cannot create it." Getting on, therefore, does not mean "more horses, more footmen, more fortune, more public honour,—it means more personal soul. He only is advancing in life whose heart is getting softer, whose blood warmer, whose brain quicker, whose spirit is entering into living peace." Education is a preparation for complete living; therefore Ruskin adopts Milton's definition of the complete and generous education as, "that which fits a man to perform justly, skillfully, and magnanimously, all the duties of all the offices of life."

Frederic Harrison gives Ruskin's *Unto This Last* first place as the most original book in modern English literature. He ranks it as a masterpiece of pure, incisive, brilliant, imaginative writing, "a book glowing with wit and fire and passion." The heart of the message is that every man is born with a gift appointed

John Ruskin

by his fathers, and that happiness begins with grasping the handle of one's own being. The greatest and most enduring work is done for love, and not for wage. The soldier's task is to keep the state in liberty, and when the second or third battle of Gettysburg or Ypres comes, he does not go on a strike, but puts death and duty in front of him and keeps his face to the front; in like manner the physician is appointed to keep the state in health and in time of yellow fever or the Black Death he works as hard for nothing as for a large fee, even as a father, in time of famine, shipwreck or battle, will sacrifice himself for his son.

Ruskin held that the commercial text, "Buy in the cheapest market and sell in the dearest," was part truth, and part falsehood. "Buy in the cheapest market? Yes; but what made your market cheap? Charcoal may be cheap among the roof timbers after a fire, and bricks may be cheap in your streets after an earthquake, but fire and earthquake may not be, therefore, national benefits. Sell in the dearest market? Yes; but what made your market dear? Was it to a dying man who gave his last coin rather than starve, or to a soldier on his way to pillage the bank, that you put your fortune? The final consummation of wealth is in full-breathed,

Diffusion of the Beautiful

bright-eyed and happy-hearted human creatures." Therefore, said Ruskin, "I can imagine that England may cast all thoughts of possessive wealth back to the barbaric nations among whom they first arose; and that, while the sand of the Indias and adamant of Golconda may yet stiffen the housings of the charger, and flash from the turban of the slave, she at last may be able to lead forth her sons, saying, 'These are my jewels!'"

Whether, therefore, property shall be a curse or a blessing depends upon man's administrative intelligence. "For centuries great districts of the world, rich in soil, and favoured in climate, have lain desert, under the rage of their own rivers, not only desert, but plague-struck. The stream which, rightly directed, would have flowed in soft irrigation from field to field,—would have purified the air, given food to man and beast, and carried their burdens for them on its bosom—now overwhelms the plain, and poisons the wind, its breath pestilence, and its work famine. In like manner, wealth may become water of life, the riches of the hand and wisdom, or wealth may be the last and deadliest of national plagues, water of Marah, the water of which feeds the roots of all evil." Man's body alone is related to factory and

John Ruskin

mine. No amount of ingenuity will ever make iron and steel digestible. Neither the avarice nor the rage of men will ever feed them. And however the apple of Sodom and the grape of Gomorrah may spread the table with dainties of ashes and nectar of asps,—so long as men live by bread, the far-away valleys laugh only as they are covered with the gold of God, and echo the shouts of His happy multitudes.

During the closing and most fruitful period of his career, Ruskin's supreme thought had to do with the manufacture of souls of good quality. Quite beyond the influence of some hero or statesman was the influence, hidden, constant, but immeasurable, of the spirit of the invisible God. "If you ask me for the sum of my life-work, the answer is this,—whatever Jesus saith unto you, do that." Daniel Webster himself never made a more powerful plea for the Christian Church and preacher than Ruskin's statement on the importance of the hour on Sunday, after the people have been exposed for six days to the full weight of the world's temptation. That hour when men and women come in, breathless and weary with the week's labour and "a man sent with a message, which is a matter of life or death, has but thirty minutes to get at the separate hearts of a thousand men, to con-

Diffusion of the Beautiful

vince them of all their weaknesses, to shame them for all their sins, to warn them of all their dangers, to try by this way and that to stir the hard fastenings of those doors, where the Master Himself has stood and knocked, yet none opened, and to call at the openings of those dark streets, where Wisdom herself has stretched forth her hands and no man hath regarded,—thirty minutes to raise the dead in!—let us but once understand and feel this, and the pulpit shall become a throne like unto a marble rock in the desert, about which the people gather to slake their thirst.”

And in the very fullness of his power, when his bow was in full strength, and every sentence and arrow tipped with fire, Ruskin gathered his strength for a final study of the obligations of wealth to poverty, of wisdom to ignorance,—the opportunity of rich men to serve their generation, and make the world once more an Eden garden of happiness and delight. Just as men sweep together an acre of red roses, and condense the blossoms into a little vial filled with the precious attar, we may condense several volumes of Ruskin into a single parable. Why has one man ten-talent power? Why have ninety-nine men only one-talent power? Why is one boy ten years of age and strong, while in the same

John Ruskin

orphan asylum are ninety-nine little boys one year old? And what if some kind hand hath spread the table with orange, date, and plum, with every sweet fruit and nutritious grain? Has the ten-year-old boy, answering to the ten-talent man, a right to dash up to the table, and with one hand sweep together all the fruits, and with the other hand, all the cereals, milk and cream, while he shouts to the ninety-nine little one-year-old children, "Every fellow for himself! Get all you can! Keep all you can! The devil take the hind-most!" This, says Ruskin, is the fashion of certain rust-kings, and moth-kings. Why is that one boy ten years of age? Is his strength not for the sole purpose of carrying these foods to the little one-year-old children, scarcely able to provide for themselves? It is said of the Master and Lord of us all, that "being rich, for our sakes He made Himself poor." And the kings in the realm of art, or song, of industry or finance, have been ordained by God, not to loot the world of its blossoms, not to squeeze men, like so many purple clusters, into their own cups. In the vegetable world the expert pinches off ninety-nine roses, and forces the rich and vital currents into one great rose at the end of the stock. But what if a ten-talent man should

Diffusion of the Beautiful

pinch out ninety-nine lesser men as competitors, and force the vital elements of all their separate factories and stores, that were intended to be distributed among many men, of lesser gifts, into his one treasure house?

Ruskin not only pointed the moral but fashioned his own life after it. He was one of the few men who have lived what they taught. He fell heir to what his generation thought was a very large fortune. He made another fortune by sheer force of genius. But he held his treasure as a trust fund in the interest of God's poor. And so-called practical men turned upon him, with the bitterness and hate of wolves that try to pull down some noble stag. His articles were shut out of the *Cornhill Magazine*. Through the influence of selfish men who feared the influence of his teachings upon the people, he was for a time bitterly assaulted. Scoffed at and maligned, he overworked and passed from one attack of brain fever to another. When it was too late, the angry voices died out of the air, and his sun cleared itself of clouds. When at last a wreath of honour was offered Ruskin, it was as if an old man had taken the blossoms and the laurel leaf, and carried them out to God's acre, to be placed in the snow upon his mother's grave. But ours is a world that first

John Ruskin

slays the prophet and then builds his sepulchre. It is indeed, as the wise man said, a world that crucifies the Saviour.

And we can say of Ruskin what James Martineau said of the world's injustice, that "in almost every age which has stoned the prophets, and loaded its philosophers with chains, the ringleaders of the anarchy have been, not the lawless and infamous of their day, but the archons and chief priests, who could protect their false idols with a grand and stiff air, and do their wrongs in the halls of justice, and commit their murders as a savoury sacrifice; so that it has been by no rude violence, but by clean and holy hands that the guides, the saints, the redeemers of men have been poisoned in Athens, tortured in Rome, burned in Florence, crucified in Jerusalem." And we ought not to be surprised that a world that threatened Milton, starved Swammerdam, imprisoned Bunyan, and assassinated Lincoln, should break the health and the heart of John Ruskin, who poured out his very life-blood to redeem the people from ignorance, and sloth, and wrong.

Index

- ABELARD and Héloïse, 19
 Achilles, 37
 Act of Toleration, The, 114
Adam Bede, 146
 Æneas, The wanderings of, 35
 Alexander the Great, 86, 103
 Alexander the Sixth, 42, 51
 Alva, Duke of, 61, 66, 67, 68, 71, 72, 73, 74, 75
 Angelo, Michael, 11, 12, 15, 27, 39, 123, 140
Areopagitica, 131, 132
 Aristotle, 25
 Arnold, Matthew, 144
 Asbury, Francis, 162
 Asia Minor, 55
 Athens, 26, 37, 50, 84, 195
 Augustus Cæsar, 36
 BACON, FRANCIS, 32
 Balfour, Lord, 89
 Barnett, Canon, 197
 Barrett, Elizabeth, 39
 Beatrice, 19, 20, 21, 22, 24, 26, 30, 205
 Bedford Jail, 32, 85
 Beecher, Henry Ward, 158
 "Beggars," The fleet of, 73, 74, 77
 Bernard the Monk, 105
 Birrell, Augustine, 144
 Black Death, The, 97, 100
 "Bloody Council," The, 57
 Booth, William, 199
 Boswell's *Life of Johnson*, 151
 Bradford, William, 57
 Brescia, 43
 Brougham, Henry, 103
 Browning, Robert, 39
 Bunyan, John, 12, 32, 85, 105, 142, 216
 Burke, Edmund, 132
 CALVIN, JOHN, 54
 Carlyle, Thomas, 89, 145
 Cateau - Cambrésis, Treaty of, 70
 Cavour, 39, 166
 Cecilia, St., 21
 Cervantes, 84
 Charles I of England, 94, 95, 99, 101, 102, 103, 109, 110, 112, 123, 132, 133
 Charles II of England, 111, 112
 Charles V, Emperor of Germany, 69
 Charles VIII of France, 48
 Charles IX of France, 74
 Childe Harold, 23
 Church, The, 15, 41, 53, 63, 93
 Columbus, Christopher, 14, 35, 200

Index

- Common people in the
Dark Ages, The, 14
Comus, 121
Constantinople, 36, 40, 88,
168
Copernicus, 35
Cromwell, Oliver, 57, 85,
86, 87, 88, 91, 97, 98,
102, 103, 106, 107, 108,
109, 110, 111, 112, 113,
114, 123, 132, 133, 134,
135
"Crowning Mercy of
Worcester, The," 109
Curtis, George William, 9
- DANTE, ALIGHIERI, 10, 11,
13, 15, 16, 18, 20, 21, 22,
23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28,
29, 30, 31, 32, 34, 40, 50,
105, 123, 136, 140, 142,
205
Dark Ages, The, 14, 36
Dekker, 118
DeQuincey, Thomas, 129
Divine Comedy, The, 19,
22, 23, 24, 136
Divine Right of Kings,
The, 91, 113, 123
- EASTER DAY, 25
Eclipse in English liter-
ature, 125
Edison, Thomas, 191
Eliot, George, 39, 146
Eliot, Sir John, 95, 101
England's darkest hour,
89
England in the days of
Charles I, 97, 98, 99
Erasmus, 54, 57
Este, Duke of, 41
- FARMER OF HUNTINGDON,
The, 90, 108
Ferrara, 40
Feudalism, 14
Ficino, 45
Florence, 14, 16, 37, 38,
43, 45, 46, 47, 50, 52,
216
Foch, Marshal, 86
Francis of Assisi, 105
Franklin, Benjamin, 12,
147, 178
French Revolution, The,
144
- GARIBALDI, 39, 166, 167,
168, 169, 170, 171, 173,
174, 176, 177, 179, 180,
181, 182, 184, 186, 187;
in the United States,
177
Garibaldi's aim—a united
Italy, 182; Anita, 174,
175, 177; charmed
life, 168, 169; power
over his troops, 185;
life in South America,
175; reckless courage,
171, 172; refusal of
throne, 181; return to
Italy, 175; loyalty to
Victor Immanuel, 179;
victories, 181
Geography, The science
of, 15
George, David Lloyd, 89
Geryon, 25
Gioberti, 38
Giotto, 7, 38
Gladstone, 180
Goethe, 27
Grant, General, 86
Great Remonstrance, The,
102

Index

- Gulf Stream, Influence of the, 163
- HALLAM the historian, 10
- HAMILTON, Alexander, 168, 178
- Hamlet, 13
- Hampden, John, 101, 104, 108, 123
- Harrison, Frederic, 106, 209
- Helen of Troy, 36, 37
- Henry of Navarre, 103
- History, The scope of, 18
- Hogarth, William, 145
- Holland, 55, 56, 57, 59
- Homer, 10, 11, 12, 13, 123
- Horace, 136
- House of Lords, The, 12
- Hume, David, 145
- Idylls of the King*, 23
- Imitation of Christ*, 154
- In Darkest England*, 199
- Inferno*, The, 31, 32
- Inquisition, The, 65, 74
- Italian language, The, 11
- Italian literature, 18
- JAMES I OF ENGLAND, 117
- Jonson, Ben, 90, 117
- Julius Cæsar, 86
- KEATS, JOHN, 12
- Kenilworth Castle, 96
- King Alfred's Bible, 12
- Kipling, Rudyard, 190
- Kossuth, Louis, 178
- Last Judgment*, The, 27
- Law's *Serious Call*, 154
- Latin tongue, The, 11
- Lecky the historian, 144, 155
- Leonardo, 35
- Leyden, Siege of, 77, 78, 79, 80
- Lincoln, Abraham, 57, 58, 99, 102, 113, 182, 194
- Lorenzo the Magnificent, 45, 46, 47
- Lowell, James Russell, 31, 137, 140, 141
- Lucifer, 25
- Luther, Martin, 49, 54
- Lycidas*, 121
- MACAULAY, LORD, 116, 117, 137, 138, 144
- Macbeth*, 13
- Marlow, 90, 117
- Marston Moor, Battle of, 103, 109
- Martineau, James, 216
- Mary Queen of Scots, 99
- Massacre of St. Bartholomew, 74
- Massinger, Philip, 118
- "Mayflower, The," 115
- Mazzini, 39, 166, 168, 170
- Mæcenæ, 36
- Medici, The, 48
- "Mermaid" Tavern, The, 116
- Methodists, The early, 146
- Methodism, world-wide sphere of, 162
- Michelet, 183
- Middle Ages, The, 26
- Mill, John Stuart, 16
- Milton, John, 16, 103, 106, 112, 115, 116, 117, 119, 120, 129, 132, 138, 139, 140, 142, 216; and

Index

- his studies, 120, 121; at Cambridge, 120; made Secretary of State, 133
Milton's belief in himself, 121; fight for relationships, 126; pamphlets, 131; views on divorce, 126, 127
Mirandola, Picadella, 44, 45
Modern world, The dawn of, 37, 38
Monte Rosa, 13
Moravians, The, 155
Morley, John, 111
Morley's *Life of Gladstone*, 156
Morris, William, 196
- NAPOLEON, 103, 164
Naseby, Battle of, 109
Nelson, Lord, 146
Newton, Sir Isaac, 200
- Othello*, 13
- PARADISE, 26, 28
Paradise Lost, 123, 136, 139
Paradise Regained, 123
Pattison, Mark, 129
Paul II, 41
Penelope, 36, 37
Pericles, 37
Peter the Hermit, 49
Petrarch, 34
Philip II of Spain, 56, 57, 61, 63, 65, 68, 69, 70, 74
Phillips, Wendell, 90, 158
Pius II, 41
Pilgrim's Progress, The, 85
- Pitt, William, 144, 146
Plato, 45
Pope, Alexander, 16
Prince Djem, 51
Prince Rupert, 109, 111
Priors of Florence, The, 16
Purgatory, 25, 29, 30, 32
Puritanism, 142
Puritans, The, 138, 139
Pym, John, 101, 108, 123
- QUEEN VICTORIA, 180, 191
- RALEIGH, SIR WALTER, 103
Raphael, 11, 21, 112, 123
Ravenna, 32
"Renaissance, The Morning Star of," 10
Renaissance, The, 35
Restoration, The, 135
Revival of learning, The, 34
Richelieu, 144
Ring and the Book, The, 39
Rodin's *Thinker*, 191
Rome, 35, 41, 51, 216
Romola, 39
Ruskin, John, 57, 190, 192, 193, 195, 196, 197, 198, 199, 200, 203, 205, 206, 207, 208, 210, 211, 213, 214, 215, 216; and social reform, 194; books of his childhood, 207; world's debt to, 205
- SAVONAROLA, 37, 39, 40, 41, 42, 44, 46, 49, 51, 53, 84

Index

- Shakespeare, 10, 11, 13,
90, 117, 141
Shelley, 141
Socrates, 50, 84
St. Peter's Cathedral, 15
Story of the Dutch Re-
public, Motley's, 39
Swammerdam, 216

TASSO, 99
Taylor's *Purity of Inten-*
tion, 154
Tennyson, 106, 115
Torquemada, 64
Toynbee, Arnold, 197,
198
Truth, Sojourner, 202,
203
Turner, J. W., 205
Tyndale, William, 54

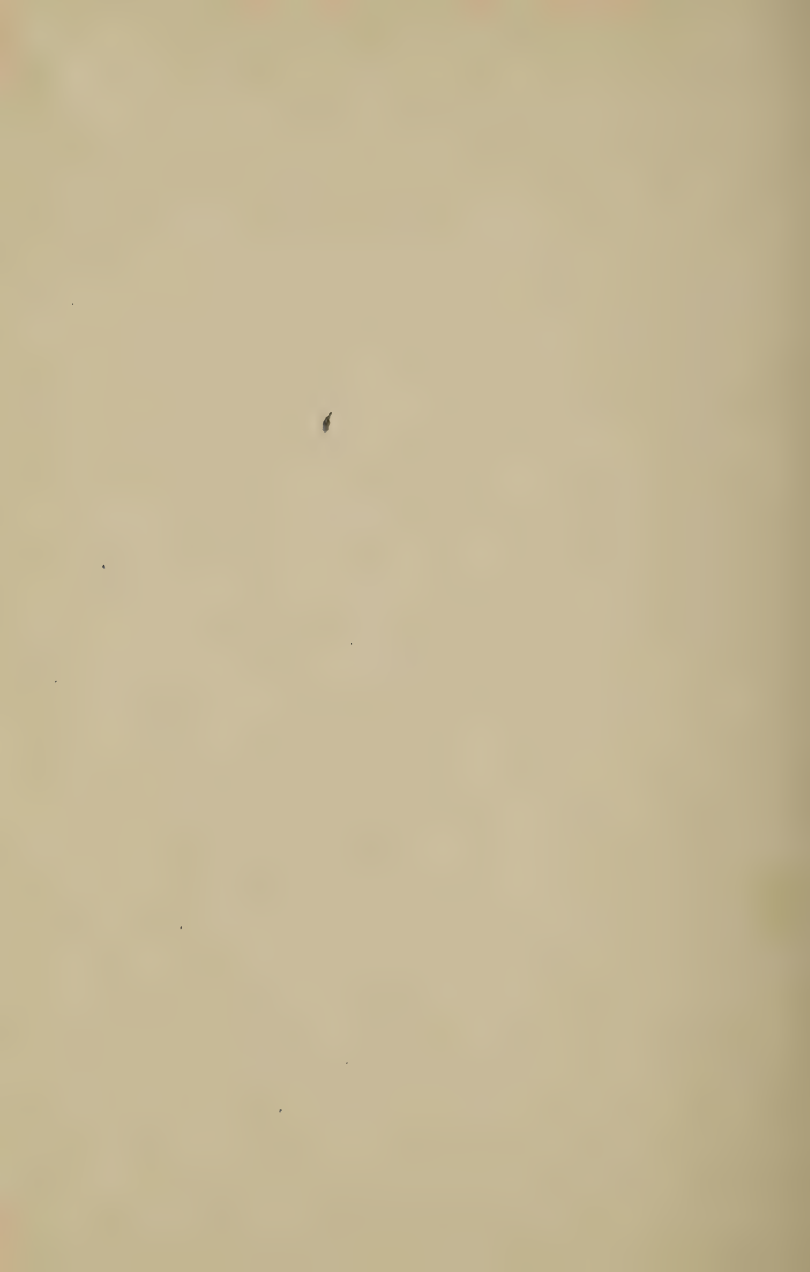
ULYSSES, 13, 36, 37

VENICE, 55
Verona, Bishop of, 53
Virgil, 24, 29
Vita Nuova, 21
Voltaire, 26, 115

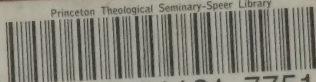
WALPOLE, HORACE, 145,
151
Washington, George, 99,
102, 113, 143, 168, 182

Webster, Daniel, 103, 178,
212
Wellington, Duke of,
146
Wesley, Charles, 147, 148
Wesley, John, 143, 144,
145, 150, 152, 153, 154,
155, 158, 159, 160, 161,
162, 163, 164; at Ox-
ford, 154; growth of
followers, 143; *Journal*
of, 150, 153; labours of,
100, 152, 153, 156, 157;
last words of, 164; lib-
erality of, 161; moral
courage of, 157; perse-
cution of, 158; per-
sonal traits, 159; plan
for world evangeliza-
tion, 162
Wesley, Samuel, 153
Wesley, Susannah, 153
Whitefield, George, 147,
148, 149, 155
Wilberforce, William,
194
William the Silent, 56,
57, 59, 61, 66, 68, 69,
70, 71, 72, 73, 76, 77,
80, 82
Wordsworth, William,
200

Printed in the United States of America



Princeton Theological Seminary-Speer Library



1 1012 01121 7751